Multicultural Competence and Factors Influencing Its Development: The Case of Greek Pre-Service Teachers

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and the factors influencing its development, taking Greece as a case study. Multicultural competence is a concept used frequently to describe teachers' knowledge, attitudes and skills related to making educational experiences relevant to all students while also taking into consideration their diverse backgrounds. Despite featuring highly in academic literature and policy agendas worldwide, pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and the factors influencing it are to-date rarely examined. Bringing together literature from multicultural competence, multicultural teacher training and geographies of education and learning, this thesis contributes to an increased understanding of the concept and its main drivers.

This study uses an innovative mixed-methods approach to capture more holistically the complex concept of multicultural competence and the factors influencing it, utilising the construction of a statistical model and path analysis with focus group discussions. The empirical dataset comprises 356 questionnaires completed by final-year undergraduate students of Primary Education from three departments in Greece and 6 focus group discussions with students recruited (out of the same pool of participants), conducted equally across the three departments, in which questionnaires were administered. Thus, this study contributes to geographies of education and learning by bringing together a direct engagement with young people, making them the subject of educational research, with an exploration of the influence of wider processes of formal and informal educational spaces on their learning.

The study's findings show that, although based crudely on the quantitative scalar measurements, Greek pre-service teachers' multicultural competence scores are relatively high, their narratives present a more complex reality, revealing misconceptions around its practical manifestations and a general lack in multicultural teaching knowledge and skills with a social justice orientation. Moreover, the study traces webs of causal connections between multicultural competence and pre-service teachers' sociocultural positionalities, experiences of international mobilities, multicultural encounters as well as experiences of both formal and informal curricula across diverse spaces of learning. In doing so, the study reveals the importance of thinking relationally about the spatialisation of multicultural competence and offers invaluable insights to the academic literature and policy debates around the best ways to prepare multiculturally competent educators.

Table of Contents

Abstract i

List of Tables v

List of Figures v

Acknowledgements vi

1. Introduction 1

1.1. Research Purpose, Aims and Questions 2

1.2. Thesis Outline 7

2. Literature Review 10

2.1. Multicultural Competence 11

2.2. Factors Influencing Pre-Service Teachers' Multicultural Competence 19

2.2.1. Multicultural Experiences and Encounters 20

2.2.2. Personal Beliefs towards Diversity: Attachment to National Homogeneity 24

2.2.3. Diversity-Related Modules Attended during Teacher Training Studies 26

2.2.4. Practical Implementation of Multicultural Education: The Teaching Practicum Experience 28

2.2.5. Sociodemographic and Personal Background Characteristics 30

2.3. Greece as a Case Study 33

2.3.1. Describing 'Us' and the 'Other' in the Greek Society 34

2.3.1.1. Political Discourse towards Diversity in Greece 40

2.3.1.2. Public Attitudes towards Diversity in Greece 42

2.3.1.3. Immigrants, Refugees and National Belonging 44

2.3.2. Diversity in the Greek Educational System 47

2.3.2.1. Educational Curricula and Textbooks: Ethnocentrism or Multiculturalism? . 49

2.3.2.2. Diversity Management Initiatives in Greek Educational Policy 55

2.3.2.2.1. Tutorial and Reception Classes 56

2.3.2.2.2. Intercultural Schools and the Institute for the Education of Co-ethnic Returnees and for Intercultural Education 59

2.3.2.2.3. Action Programs for the Education of Culturally Diverse Students 62

2.3.2.3. The Role of Initial Teacher Training 65

3. Methodology 70

3.1. Quantitative Methodology 73

3.1.1. Description of the Model 77

3.1.2. Variable Construction 78
3.1.2.1. Dependent Variable (Multicultural Competence) 78
3.1.2.2. Independent Variables 80
3.1.2.2.1. Multicultural Experiences and Encounters 80
3.1.2.2.2. Attachment to National Homogeneity 81
3.1.2.2.3. Diversity-Related University Training 81
3.1.2.3. Control Variables (Sociodemographic and Personal Background Characteristics) 82
3.1.3. Quantitative Data Collection 83
3.1.4. Questionnaire Construction 85
3.2. Qualitative Methodology 87
3.2.1. Focus Groups: Construction and Conduction 90
3.2.1.1. Participant Recruitment 90
3.2.1.2. Number of Participants 90
3.2.1.3. Spatiotemporal Context 91
3.2.1.4. Content 93
3.2.2. Qualitative Data Analysis Approach 99
3.3. Ethics and Positionality 100
4. Quantitative Findings 105
4.1. Sample's Descriptive Characteristics 105
4.1.1. Control Variables 105
4.1.2. Independent Variables 106
4.1.2.1. Multicultural Experiences and Encounters 106
4.1.2.2. Attachment to National Homogeneity 109
4.1.2.3. Diversity-Related Modules Attended 109
4.1.2.4. Teaching Practicum 113
4.1.3. Dependent Variable (Multicultural Competence) 115
4.2. Variable Relationships 121
4.3. Multicultural Competence Model 123
4.3.1. Background Personal Characteristics (Control Variables) 127
4.3.2. Independent Variables 130
4.3.2.1. Multicultural Experiences and Encounters 130
4.3.2.2. Attachment to National Homogeneity 132

4.3.2.3. University Training – Diversity-Related Modules Attended and Teaching Practicum ... 133
5. Qualitative Findings ... 137
5.1. Conceptualisations of Multicultural Competence in Theory and Practice ... 138
5.2. Attachment to National Homogeneity: Diversity, Representation and Belonging in the Greek Educational System and Society ... 155
5.3. Experience of Diversity-Related Training: The Gap between Theory and Practice ... 174
6. Conclusion ... 187
6.1. Summary of Findings ... 187
6.2. Contribution to the Literature ... 189
6.3. Educational Policy Recommendations for Multicultural Teacher Training ... 198
6.3.1. Taking Gender and Political Orientation into Consideration ... 198
6.3.2. Enhancing Opportunities for Travelling and Studying Abroad ... 199
6.3.3. Facilitating Multicultural Encounters ... 200
6.3.4. Challenging Ideas of National Homogeneity and Promoting Diversity Inclusion ... 201
6.3.5. Infusing Modules with Multicultural Elements and Opportunities for Practice ... 202
6.3.6. Establishing a Link between Multicultural Education Implementation and Teaching Practice Experiences ... 203
6.4. Suggestions for Future Research ... 205
6.5. Concluding Remarks ... 206
References ... 208
Legislative Sources ... 270
Appendix A: Multicultural Competence's Components and Their Content ... 273
Appendix B: Factor's Characteristics and Loadings ... 274
Appendix C: Sample Questionnaire ... 276
Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet ... 287
Appendix E: Inform Consent Form ... 290
Appendix F: Focus Group Prompt Sets ... 291
Appendix G: Tables and Figures from Quantitative Data Analysis ... 295
G.1. Control Variables' Characteristics ... 295
G.2. Independent Variables' Characteristics ... 296
G.3. Dependent Variable Characteristics ... 300
G.4. Multicultural Competence Model ... 302

G.5. SPSS Outputs 303
G.5.1. SPSS Output Representing the Direct Effects 303
G.5.2. SPSS Outputs Representing the Total Effects (Reduced Form Equations) 304
Appendix H: Focus Group Discussion Information – Numbering, Place and Participant Information 316

List of Tables

Table 1: Immigrant, Repatriated and Roma Students in Public Greek Primary Schools by Academic Year (2010-2015) 48
Table 2: Multicultural Encounters: Item's Descriptive Characteristics 108
Table 3: Attachment to National Homogeneity Scale: Items' Descriptive Characteristics 109
Table 4: Attendance of Diversity-Related Modules throughout Teacher Training Studies 110
Table 5: Number of Diversity-Related Modules Attended throughout Teacher Training Studies 110
Table 6: Module Titles Reported by Department 111
Table 7: Sum of Diverse Elements Included in Diversity-Related Courses Attended 112
Table 8: Total Counts of Diverse Elements Included in the Diversity-Related Modules Attended 113
Table 9: Perceived Relevance of Multicultural Education Implementation to Teaching Practicum Scale: Items' Descriptive Characteristics 114
Table 10: Multicultural Teaching Knowledge Scale: Items' Descriptive Characteristics 117
Table 11: Teachers' Multicultural Attitudes Survey: Items' Descriptive Characteristics 118
Table 12: Multicultural Teaching Skills Scale: Items' Descriptive Characteristics 120
Table 13: Correlation Matrix 122
Table 14: The Regression Coefficients Estimating the Standardised Path Coefficients 125
Table 15: Direct and Total Effects of the Independent Variables on Multicultural Competence 127

List of Figures

Figure 1: Sample Model Representation - Path Model Including All Hypothesised Unidirectional Effects of the Variables (i.e. Fully Specified) 76
Figure 2: The Path Model Including Only the Statistically Significant Effects of the Variables Using Unstandardised Path Coefficients 124

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1. Introduction

According to the most recent publication of the United Nations (2017), there are currently nearly 256 million migrants (i.e. those not living in their country of birth) recorded worldwide, more than ever before. This demographic change is reflected in the educational context, with student populations across the globe becoming increasingly diverse too (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Kodama, 2015; Nieto, 2017). To address the growing diversity present in the school classrooms, there is a pressing need to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to provide educational experiences relevant to and efficient for both native majority students and those with a migrant or minority background, hereafter referred to as culturally diverse (Banks, 2010; Chiu et al., 2017; Gay, 2010a; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016). Although discourses of diversity and equality have become increasingly important (Valentine & Harris, 2016), recent findings highlight how in most cases students with an immigrant background[1] keep on presenting lower academic achievement (OECD, 2016a), as well as a sense of school belonging compared to their native peers (Dimitrova, Chasiotis, & Van de Vijver, 2016; OECD, 2015; PPMI, 2017; Schachner, Juang, Moffitt, & Van de Vijver, 2018). Culturally diverse students are also found to run higher risk for experiencing discrimination and stereotyping by both teachers and their peers within the school context (Baysu, Celeste, Brown, Verschueren, & Phalet, 2016).

Multicultural teacher education has arisen as a potential solution for tackling the aforementioned issues (Gay, 2010b; Nieto, 2017; Tarozzi, 2014). As teachers are recognised among the key agents for the promotion of cultural diversity and multicultural education (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Gorski, 1997; Council of Europe, 2008a, 2016), they are an influential factor that can impact the (re)production of knowledge and identities within the educational institutions. Teachers are recognised as playing an essential role in challenging negative attitudes, promoting respect and fostering understanding around living together in diversity (Allan, 2011). For this reason, teachers need to be aware that the diversity their students bring in “complicates the standardised approaches to delivering the curriculum” (Collins & Coleman, 2008: 289) and be ready to adjust the learning experience to their

[1] The OECD defines “students with an immigrant background” as students whose mother and father were both born in a country other than the one where they sat the PISA test (OECD, 2016a: 243), encompassing both “first-generation” and “second-generation” immigrant students.

students' needs (Bhopal & Danaher, 2013). Should they fulfil these criteria, future teachers could act as agents of change towards meaningful diversity integration for social justice (Pantić & Florian, 2015). Consequently, the preparation of teachers, ready to provide equitable and quality education for all students features as a top-priority for both academics (e.g. Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Chiu et al., 2017; Hadjisoteriou, Faas, & Angelides, 2015; Keengwe, 2017) and educational policy agendas around the globe (e.g. Council of Europe, 2016; PPMI, 2017; UNESCO, 2015).

Within the education literature, leading scholars posit that teachers are required to gain more knowledge, attitudes and skills regarding the impact of culture and cultural diversity in teaching and learning in order to effectively and efficiently address multicultural classrooms (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Gay, 2010a; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Multicultural competence is a concept used frequently to describe and research educators' knowledge, attitudes and skills related to making educational experiences relevant to all students while also taking into consideration their diverse backgrounds (Kumashiro, 2015; Spinthourakis, 2010). Specifically, Gay (2013) posits that improving pre-service teachers'[2] multicultural competence could lead to the provision of equal educational opportunities for all.

1.1. Research Purpose, Aims and Questions

Despite the high importance given to the topic, studies examining pre-service teachers' multicultural competence are scarce, mainly qualitative and employing small sample sizes. Moreover, the findings regarding the multicultural preparedness of pre-service teachers yield inconsistent results. On the one hand, there are studies showing that a large share of pre-service teachers appears to be unaware of or having limited knowledge on how to effectively address students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Gorski, 2009a; Lander, 2014; Seidl et al., 2015; Neuharth-Pritchett, Reiff, & Pearson, 2001; Tarozzi, 2014). On the other hand, alternative evidence indicates a trend towards greater acceptance of and appreciation for multicultural education as well as more favourable attitudes towards diversity among pre-service teachers (Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore & Flowers, 2003; Broido, 2004; Castro, 2010).

[2] The term is used to describe undergraduate students currently enrolled in teacher education programs.

As the student population across the globe becomes more and more diverse (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Basu, 2011), the need to prepare multiculturally competent teachers is pressing. Thus, research examining pre-service teachers' multicultural competence at the end of their teaching studies is essential in an attempt to understand how well teacher training departments are currently dealing with this challenge (Seidl et al., 2015; Swazo & Celinska, 2014). Studies on the topic can provide useful insights in terms of the strengths and weaknesses pre-service teachers have in multicultural competence and assist in the (re)evaluation of the practices adapted by the various teacher training departments toward this direction.

My argument is that knowing the level of pre-service teachers' multicultural competence is not enough for teacher training departments to effectively improve their multicultural provisions. What would be beneficial is an examination of the factors influencing multicultural competence. So far, however, studies examining the factors influencing pre-service teachers' multicultural competence are scarce (Parkhouse, Tichnor-Wagner, Montana Cain, & Glazier, 2016; Tarozzi, 2014). Moreover, most of the research carried out on multicultural competence in teacher training focuses on the effect of stand-alone modules, short-term field experiences or study abroad experiences (Seidl et al., 2015; Parkhouse et al., 2016). In an attempt to avoid overemphasizing the effect of study abroad experiences and university modules' attendance (Parkhouse et al., 2016), the need to examine other formal and informal educational spaces as well as personal and professional learning experiences as potential factors influencing multicultural competence has been highlighted (Deardorff, 2015). A recent qualitative study addressed this issue by bringing up the relevance of the concept of "accumulating experiences" in explaining the development of multicultural competence, understood as the cumulative impact of prior and present experiences, teaching contexts and personal dispositions, across formal and informal educational spaces (Parkhouse et al., 2016: 280). In summation, while we are becoming more knowledgeable about how diversity-related modules and study abroad experiences influence multicultural competence, we have little empirical evidence about the effect of other factors (Seidl et al., 2015; Parkhouse et al., 2016). As questions related to pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and the factors influencing it seem to be inadequately addressed and yet highly relevant (Zong, 2009), the present study aims to fill in the aforementioned gaps, examining both pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and the factors influencing it.

Multicultural competence is examined as a context-dependent and person-specific, never-ending educational learning process (Dervin, 2017; Dervin, Paatela-Nieminen, Kuoppala, & Riitaoja, 2012). Najar (2016) has already highlighted the importance of considering both formal and informal spaces and the experiences that take place within them as a useful way for examining how multicultural learning takes place for international students during their studies abroad. Based on Najar's argument and influenced by geographical understandings of learning processes, this study conceptualises multicultural competence as (re)produced across a variety of spaces as well as multiple timescales and as differentially experienced based on individuals' socio-spatial positionalities and subjectivities (Brooks, Fuller, & Waters, 2012; Holloway & Jöns, 2012; Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010; Robertson, 2010; Waters, 2017, 2018).

For this reason, in the present study, a variety of factors are taken into consideration as influential for multicultural competence, ranging from socio-demographic characteristics to international mobilities, multicultural encounters, attitudes towards national homogeneity and experiences of formal and informal educational curricula. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first attempt for the systematic combination of all the factors mentioned above for the prediction of multicultural competence. As such, this study aims to contribute to the literature on multicultural competence through addressing the call for examining what other identity characteristics, attitudes and experiences aside of travelling/studying abroad and attending diversity-related modules during teacher training influence multicultural competence and how these interact with each other (Parkhouse et al., 2016). Inspired by the so-called 'spatial turn' in educational theory (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005; Soja, 1996), still prevalent in the fields of geographies and sociology of education (Brooks et al., 2012; Brock, 2016; Gulson & Symes, 2007; Robertson, 2010), as well as the most recent 'mobilities turn' (Urry, 2000, as cited by Waters, 2017: 280), this approach aims to shed light into the spatialisation of multicultural competence for pre-service teachers, thinking "relationally and contextually" about how pre-service teachers' multicultural competence is influenced by the interplay between subjectivities and structures across various formal and informal educational spaces (Waters, 2017: 280). In other words, it responds to the call of Holloway and Jöns (2012: 482), to look into a variety of different education and learning spaces and examine "the links between these and other facets of life in diverse (and interrelated)" contexts when examining learning experiences, like multicultural competence. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the literature on the geographies of education and learning by providing information regarding

the relationships between pre-service teachers' subjectivities and their formal and informal learning experiences across various spaces of learning for multicultural competence acquisition (Holloway & Jöns, 2012).

As multicultural competence is a complex construct, combining knowledge, attitudes and skills, and also differentially experienced by individuals, previous studies carried out on the topic have questioned the suitability of the sole use of quantitative methods in fully capturing it (Gierke et al., 2018). However, as the studies conducted so far on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and/or factors influencing its development are predominantly qualitative (Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008; Kaur, 2012), the need for quantitative data remains, as a means to capture bigger and more representative samples (Parkhouse et al., 2016) in an attempt to generalise findings and inform relevant policy. For this reason, the present study is going to adopt a mixed-methods approach, utilising both quantitative and qualitative elements so as to offer a more holistic conceptualisation of the topic under examination (Kaur, 2012).

Overall, the present study seeks to address the following research questions:

- To what extent are Greek pre-service teachers multiculturally competent?
- What is the effect of sociodemographic characteristics, multicultural experiences and encounters, attachment to national homogeneity, diversity-related modules attended as well as perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to the teaching practicum (independent variables) on multicultural competence (dependent variable) for pre-service teachers in Greece?
- How (i.e. in what ways) do the aforementioned independent variables interact in predicting multicultural competence for pre-service teachers in Greece?
- In what ways do pre-service teachers' narratives contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of multicultural competence and the factors influencing its development?

On the one hand, quantitative research methods will be used to identify causal relationships and interactions within the factors mentioned above as well as between them and multicultural competence. On the other hand, the qualitative part of the study aims to bring pre-service teachers' voices and experiences to the forefront, making them the subjects of educational research (Holloway, Hubbard, Jöns, & Pimlott-Wilson, 2010), in an attempt to gain deeper insights into how they understand, experience and (re)produce multicultural

competence through their discourse around multicultural education and diversity. According to Oliha-Donaldson (2018), understanding students' discourses around diversity issues is a way of understanding how successful Higher Education (HE) is in preparing students to function in multicultural societies.

Understanding the level of pre-service teachers' multicultural competence is important as an indicator for the effectiveness of teacher training programs to prepare culturally competent educators (Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2016). The examination of the factors influencing multicultural competence is also important as it can provide insights into the type of experiences that could enhance multicultural competence (ibid; Tarozzi, 2014). Considerations around multicultural competence and the factors influencing it are particularly important for European countries, in which "there is an urgent need for teacher education programs to infuse multicultural perspectives into teacher preparation" (Acquah & Commins, 2017: 516). This need arises from previous findings, according to which, in many European countries, initial teacher education does not adequately prepare pre-service teachers to address the diversity present in their classrooms (Council of Europe, 2008b; OECD, 2010).

For this reason, the present study focuses on the under-examined European context (Acquah & Commins, 2013), taking Greece as a case study. Greece has been chosen as an interesting case study in which to examine pre-service teachers' multicultural competence because initial teacher training in the country has previously been found to inadequately prepare future teachers to address multicultural classrooms (Council of Europe, 2008b). The inadequate preparation of future teachers to be responsive towards diversity has been identified as an issue that needs to be tackled (Sakka, 2010), especially as the presence of culturally diverse students in Greek classrooms has become a norm (Spinthourakis, Aktan, & Korhonen, 2010), mostly due to the influxes of immigrants and refugees in the country since the 1990s. Within a general climate of reluctance, if not xenophobia, pertaining in terms of conceptualisations of individuals with an ethnoculturally diverse background and their impact to the Greek society (Eurobarometer, 2018; Pew Research Centre, 2014, 2016) and an educational system that has been criticised for its ethnocentric character (Chalari & Georgas, 2016), the examination of Greek pre-service teachers' multicultural competence is interesting, important and timely. Moreover, Greece forms a context that can be comparable to other Southern European countries, which follow a similar trajectory in terms of migration patterns and integration policies (King, 2000; Pugliese, 2011).

To sum up, highlighting the interrelation between subjectivities, spatialities and multicultural learning, this study responds to Massey's (1999: 5) call for a constructive breaching of disciplinary boundaries for the development of new insights and follows the call of Brooks et al. (2012) for the combination of geographical and educational approaches to tackle questions related to the spatialisation of learning. In my case, this means showing how education and geography (see Taylor, 2009: 654-655 on the interconnection between these two disciplines) can be combined in order to gain a better understanding of the role of subjectivities, spaces, formal and informal curricula (Holloway & Jöns, 2012) in the development of multicultural competence among pre-service teachers. As Hahl & Löfström (2016) put it, by understanding how current pre-service teachers consider and experience issues related to diversity, there is an opportunity to improve future teachers' preparedness to develop their multicultural competence so as to be able to use student diversity in a constructive way. Thus, following literature on critical geographies of education, this study can be a useful tool for the successful design of educational policies aiming at more "inclusive and humane structural change" (McCreary, Basu, & Godlewska, 2013: 258) through identifying ways in which HE institutions can prepare multiculturally competent pre-service teachers, ready to act as "agents of inclusion and social justice" in multicultural classrooms (Pantić & Florian, 2015: 334).

1.2. Thesis Outline

The present thesis consists of six chapters. This chapter has introduced the context and the scope of the study, including the research aim and questions.

Chapter 2 will provide a literature review on the concept of multicultural competence and the factors previously identified as influencing its development, before concluding with introducing Greece as a case study. Specifically, the first part of this chapter will present the prevalent conceptualisations of multicultural competence and relevant research conducted so far on the topic before introducing how the concept is understood and utilised in the present study as well as how previous gaps and limitations are addressed. The second part will present studies on the factors that have been found to be related to multicultural competence so far and explain the rationale behind the factors selected for inclusion in the present study. The final part will focus on describing the Greek context, in an attempt to show why examining Greek per-service teachers' multicultural competence is timely and interesting based on the country's current multicultural societal and educational reality.

Chapter 3 will provide a detailed presentation of the methodologies used in the present study. Justification will be provided regarding the choice of mixed-methods as the most appropriate approach for the topic under examination. Moreover, a case will be made regarding the specific choice for mixing a questionnaire survey with focus group discussions. Then, the specificities of the quantitative and qualitative research methods used will be introduced in turn. Firstly, the statistical model constructed and the variables included in it will be presented along with the logic behind using path analysis, before providing information on the quantitative data collection process. Secondly, the focus will shift on the focus group discussions' construction and the relevant data collection process and analysis followed.

Chapter 4 will present the quantitative findings based on the analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire survey. Descriptive statistics of the control, independent and dependent variables will be presented before moving on the relationships and causal effects identified between them. This chapter focuses on two main points, the relatively high scores participants seemed to achieve on multicultural competence and its components based on the scales used in the questionnaires and the presentation of the path analysis findings revealing the main drivers of multicultural competence as well as the interactions between them.

Chapter 5 will present the findings from the focus group discussions. The three overarching themes that came up from the data analysis will be discussed in an attempt to show how these complement quantitative findings, thus helping in providing better insights on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. Specifically, the first part of this chapter will present how participants' voices and experiences highlighted misconceptions around the practical manifestations of multicultural competence and multicultural education implementation, denoting a lack in applied multicultural teaching knowledge and skills. The second part will present how participants' narratives shed light into how the relationship between attachment to national homogeneity and multicultural competence plays out discursively, with participants favouring the former (re)producing exclusionary visions regarding diversity inclusion both in the societal and classroom level. The final part of this chapter will show how focus group data provided insights regarding the marginal role multicultural education implementation had as an element of the diversity-related modules and the teaching practicum that participants experienced as part of their teacher training.

Chapter 6 will conclude and discuss the findings of the two previous empirical chapters overall. Specifically, this chapter will highlight the contributions that the present study makes to existing literature around multicultural competence and the factors influencing its development. Finally, based on the study's findings and in relation with ongoing academic and policy debates, some educational policy recommendations will be offered around how initial teacher training programs can best prepare multiculturally competent future educators.

2. Literature Review

Multicultural competence (often also referred to as intercultural, cross-cultural or simply cultural competence) is a complex term, for which various definitions are available and no single conceptual framework for utilizing it in research is commonly agreed upon (Sue, 2001; Ridley, Barker, & Hill, 2001). For this reason, it is important that relevant research dealing with this topic specifies the framework it is based upon, especially so that appropriate methods are used to capture desired constructs (Sarraj, Carter, & Burley, 2015).

Thus, the first section of this chapter (2.1.) provides background details regarding the concept of multicultural competence and its components as well as presents research carried out so far on the topic before concluding with how the present study conceptualises the term and addresses current gaps and limitations. Apart from defining multicultural competence, it is also equally important to provide more detailed information regarding the factors that have been taken into consideration in the present study as influential for per-service teachers' multicultural competence development. The choice of factors included in the present study has been informed by relevant previous research findings and geographical understandings of education and learning, according to which, a holistic approach, taking into consideration positionalities, subjectivities as well as experiences of formal and hidden educational curricula across diverse spaces of learning provides more insightful perspectives into how individuals learn (Holloway & Jöns, 2012; Pyckett, Cloke, Barnett, Clarke & Malpass, 2010; Sefton-Green, 2009; Leander et al. 2010, Bright, Manchester, & Allendyke, 2013).

Section 2.2. provides a detailed literature review on factors previously found to be related to pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, specifying on multicultural experiences and encounters, personal attitudes towards diversity, attendance of diversity-related modules during teacher training studies, the teaching practice experience as well as sociodemographic characteristics. Moreover, the section justifies the choice of the aforementioned variables for inclusion in the present study and formulates research hypotheses. Finally, section 2.3. focuses on the context of Greece. Specifically, it starts by setting the background regarding mainstream conceptualisations of 'Greekness', diversity and belonging prevalent in the Greek society. It then focuses on the educational context and the challenges around diversity integration within it, paying specific attention to the ethnocentric national curricula, diversity integration initiatives and initial teacher education currently in place in an attempt to show why Greece was chosen as an interesting case study for the topic under examination.

2.1. Multicultural Competence

Multicultural competence (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992), often also referred to as intercultural (e.g. Portera, 2014), cross-cultural (e.g. Sue et al., 1982; Keengwe, 2017) or simply cultural competence (e.g. Sue, 2001; Moule, 2012) is a complex term, for which various definitions are available and no conceptual framework for operationalizing it in research is commonly agreed upon (Deardorff, 2015; Sue, 2001). Before I move on with a thorough discussion of the concept, it is worth justifying the use of the term 'multicultural' as the competence's descriptor. To clarify, the literature that is going to be presented on the topic has been derived from various scholars, independent of what adjective they used to describe the competence, focusing more on the meaning they ascribe to it. This decision was based on previous arguments according to which the terms intercultural, multicultural and cross-cultural can be used interchangeably (Holm & Zilliacus, 2009; Dervin, 2013; Dervin et al., 2012; Rissanen, Kuusisto, & Kuusisto, 2016). However, if not for any other reason, just for purposes of consistency, in the present study, 'multicultural' was chosen as the most appropriate term to refer to the competence under examination, as multiculturalism and multicultural education is the model I consider as the best in terms of diversity integration strategies.

Scholars like Modood (2013), Banks (1996, 2001; Banks & McGee Banks, 2010), Nieto (2000) and Sleeter (2001) have informed my understanding of multiculturalism and multicultural education. Based on this understanding, 'multicultural' transcends the stance of mere tolerance towards diversity, a critique often casted upon multiculturalism's advocates. On the contrary, it denotes that diversity matters and should be acknowledged in an attempt to face and combat the unequal power relations in place between the perceived 'majority-us' and the 'minority-other' across the various social spaces. More importantly, instead of priming the "majority precedence" (Bouchard, 2011), the multicultural highlights the need for the valued condition of the majority's recognition to be extended to minorities (Modood, 2017: 10). In general, multiculturalism focuses on the importance of the recognition of and commitment to the minority groups' rights, needs and rightful representation by the institutional structures as the basic means for achieving a re-imagined, socially just, pluralistic society (Taylor, 1994). Thus, multiculturalism places emphasis on social justice, understood as the active challenge of the power inequities in place and systemic change for 'equalising upwards' (Modood, 2013, 2017; Parekh, 2016).

Relating my abovementioned stance to the educational context and teaching practice, I understand multicultural education as culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 2014) or responsive (Gay, 2010a) pedagogy. Weinstein and her collaborators (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004) emphasise that culturally responsive pedagogy is not just a bag of tricks, but rather a whole mindset which informs educators' actions and behaviours. The central tenet of this term is the need to make classrooms and educational experiences relevant to all by recognising, respecting and actively creating space for all students' "ways of knowing and associated funds of knowledge, language and interests" (Carrillo, 2004: 179). All in all, diversity is considered as an asset rather than a deficit for culturally responsive educators (Jones, Bustamante, & Nelson, 2016).

This approach is characterised by social justice, a principal based on the recognition of the existence of power inequalities within the societal structures that privilege the majority culture and norms, thus marginalising and 'othering' minority populations and cultures (Au 2016), in order to sustain the status quo and their distinct positionalities. As Sleeter and McLaren (1995) aptly state, it is hypocritical to believe that any societal structures are culturally neutral and as Bhopal (2018) highlights, white privilege is (re)produced by the societal structures in Western societies. One such societal structure is the educational system, which privileges and reproduces certain identities and forms of capital that match the majority characteristics through its curricula, practices and stakeholders (ibid). This domination of majority norms and cultures within educational spaces and practices and the consequent underrepresentation of minority populations and experiences needs to be acknowledged, called out and acted upon by educators in order to achieve more socially just educational outcomes (Cochran-Smith, Stringer Keefe, & Cummings Carney, 2018).

Accordingly, in terms of initial teacher training, I am an advocate of critical multicultural teacher education with a social justice orientation (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gay & Howard, 2000; Gay, 2005; Gorski, 2009a). This means that teacher education should aim at engaging pre-service teachers in critical reflection of the wider socio-political discourses influencing the educational spaces and the practices embedded in them as well as encouraging them to create educational experiences relevant to all students through the implementation of counter-hegemonic teaching practices (ibid; Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001). This approach is based on the acknowledgment that what happens in the school and classroom cannot be perceived as detached from the political realities of the marginalisation

of cultural minority groups and their unequal power standing (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Contini & Pica-Smith, 2017). Thus, my understanding of a successful multicultural teacher education training is one that will help future teachers "think deeply about social justice and education towards the goal of social change" (Contini & Pica-Smith, 2017: 248), preparing them to provide equitable education opportunities for marginalised students, thus making sure that they are in a position to assist all students unravel their full potential and succeed both socially and academically.

As becomes clear, entrenched in the above is the understanding of multicultural educators with a social justice orientation as equity-oriented educators (Gorski, 2016; Cochran-Smith et al., 2016). Equity is understood as a commitment to creating educational experiences and spaces that are relevant even to the most marginalised students, by constantly examining, and if needed, challenging institutional policies and cultures so that no one is unequally represented in or benefited by the educational content (ibid). Such ideas of contesting inequalities, dominant narratives and engaging with the (re)production of disadvantages in the educational landscape in an effort to create more just educational provisions and experiences features at the forefront of recent literature from critical geographies of education, as well (Pini et al., 2017; Nguyen et al., 2017).

Commitment to social justice and equity stand at the core of multicultural competence within the educational spaces (Liang & Zhang, 2009). According to Portera (2014: 158), multicultural competence was firstly introduced during the 1940s in the United States of America (USA) and was predominantly operationalised in the business and military sectors. Since then, the term has also been used in the European context and found applicability in more fields, such as counselling but also education. Most definitions are based on the idea of a triad, which is broadly comprised of an individual's knowledge, attitudes and skills (Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2005, 2007; Deardorff, 2009; Delors et al., 2005; Moule, 2012; Portera, 2014; Sue, 2001; Grant & Gillette, 2006; Taylor & Quintana, 2003; Washington, 2003; Milner, 2006).

Based on the aforementioned three dimensions, for the purpose of this study the term could be defined as "the process of accepting, acquiring, and applying requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions for ensuring educational equity and excellence for learners" (Gallavan, 2007: 7). The three core elements of the term refer to distinct strands of an otherwise interrelated,

dynamic whole (Portera, 2014: 164; Sue, 2001: 815-816) and are both person-specific (Banks, 1994) and context-dependent (Portera, 2014: 164; Deardorff, 2009). Moreover, multicultural competence is not inherent but rather its development is a life-long process (Liang & Zhang, 2009; Portera, 2014; Sue & Torino, 2005; Saunders, Haskins, & Vasquez, 2015), taking place in and influenced by both formal spaces (e.g. schools, vocational courses) and informal contexts (e.g. while traveling abroad or through everyday interpersonal interactions) (Portera, 2014: 164; Quinlan & Deardorff, 2016). This last statement echoes the literature on geographies of education, according to which learning experiences, like multicultural competence development, are shaped and influenced by subjectivities, diverse spaces of education and their respective formal and hidden curricula (Holloway, Brown, & Pimlott-Wilson, 2011; Holloway & Jöns, 2012).

The components of multicultural competence and a description of what they entail were first outlined by Sue and his collaborators in the seminal article 'Cross-cultural Counselling Competencies' (Sue et al., 1982). The content of each component has been slightly adjusted in a later publication (Sue et al., 1992) and the most systematic presentation of the components of multicultural competence and their content is provided in Appendix A (Sue 2001: 799). Apart from the distinct elements comprising multicultural competence, Sue also makes an explicit reference to the multiple levels implicated in the acquisition and development of multicultural competence, namely the individual, professional, organizational and societal (ibid: 802-811). He further states that, although a big emphasis is given on the individual (i.e. person-specific) level, no intervention or initiative will bring about meaningful change, if the impact of organizational and wider societal context is neglected (ibid: 816-817, see also Butler & Hamnett, 2007: 1164 on the interrelation between the social and the spatial). In summary, not only is multicultural competence a multifaceted concept in terms of its content but also a multidimensional one in terms of the spaces it influences and is influenced by. Consequently, this study is going to place an emphasis on the individual level and the personal experiences of pre-service teachers to examine multicultural competence and the factors influencing it and will also take into consideration the impact that aspects of the HE teacher training curricula might have on the topic.

Constantine (2006: 9) offers a straightforward parallelism between Sue's multicultural counselling competence model and multicultural teaching competencies, highlighting how imperative it is to prepare multiculturally competent educators, who will combat educational

inequities arising from "teaching White" in multicultural classrooms. Spanierman and her collaborators (2011) tailored the multicultural competence three-dimensional model of Sue (Sue et al., 1982) to the educational context and pre-service teachers, providing an education-specific explanation of each aspect of the concept. In terms of multicultural knowledge (Spanierman et al., 2011: 445), first of all, a teacher needs to be aware of the historical social background as well as the current context shaping and influencing educational and social inequalities for diverse populations. Secondly, one also has to be aware of the cultural specificities in terms of different worldviews that individuals from various cultural groups might hold which may facilitate or hinder intra- as well as inter-group relations and learning (ibid). Finally, teachers need to be aware of the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy and the existence of differential instructional practices and learning styles (ibid). Multicultural attitudes entail an understanding of the self and 'others' as cultural beings, awareness of the existence of biases and stereotypes, but most importantly awareness of the need to create culturally sensitive learning environments for all students (ibid). Finally, the active involvement in the selection, development, implementation and assessment of strategies that enhance the academic achievement and personal development of all students as well as the review of teaching materials and school policies with regard to cultural responsiveness comprise the skills needed for a multiculturally competent educator (ibid).

Using class discussions, assignments and interviews with pre-service teachers from one of his courses, Milner (2006) also talked about the importance of multicultural knowledge, attitudes and skills in preparing educators that can be efficient and effective in addressing multicultural classrooms. Specifically, he highlighted racial awareness and knowledge of the socio-political context surrounding education, critical reflection about one's one and others' cultural background and theory-informed teaching practice as essential to multicultural competence (ibid).

Liang and Zhang (2009) also identified distinct traits that multiculturally competent educators possess. According to their statistical analysis, avoiding stereotypical expectations regarding culturally diverse students as low achievers, self-reflecting and critically examining one's own behaviour when working with culturally diverse students, setting up high, but achievable, standards for all students and communicating those clearly though the creation of differentiated instruction practices that can help all students thrive as well as acting upon and actively challenging existing inequalities, prejudice and discrimination are the trademarks of

multiculturally competent educators (ibid). Most importantly, they highlighted that pre-service teachers' multicultural competence evolves from cognition (i.e. diversity as an asset instead of a hindrance for teaching and learning), to affection (i.e. self-awareness and reflection regarding own beliefs towards and expectations from culturally diverse students) and then action (i.e. proactively react to ameliorate prejudice and discrimination in all formal and informal educational spaces as well as create engaging and relevant to all learning plans, based on individualised goal setting and differentiated instruction practices (ibid).

It is worth mentioning at this point that, despite the theoretical conceptualizing of multicultural competence as a sum of knowledge, attitudes and skills, there is little research carried out on empirically testing the validity of this presupposition (Yang & Montgomery, 2011), something which is typical for most concepts in multicultural education according to Grant, Elsbree, and Fondrie (2004). Most importantly, recent studies initiating new tools to measure multicultural teaching competence have failed to capture the attitudinal component. Specifically, Yang and Montgomery (2011), in their study trying to examine the underlying structure of multicultural competence among pre-service teachers as measured by the Multicultural Teaching Scale (Wayson, 1993), failed to capture the 'beliefs/attitudes' factor. In their explanation provided for that, they mention the initial lack of items directly addressing attitudes/beliefs in their scale (Yang & Montgomery, 2011: 268). Spanierman et al. (2011) also failed to capture the 'beliefs/attitudes' dimension with their Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale (MTCS). The authors attributed the aforementioned failure to a number of possible reasons, including the lack of emphasis on self-awareness/reflectiveness in teacher preparation programs and the consequent lack of emphasis given to the concept by pre-service teachers (ibid: 457).

Despite empirical validation failure, both the aforementioned studies highlight the importance of the attitudinal component for multicultural competence and the relevance of Sue's multicultural competence model. Yang and Montgomery (2010) conclude their article by suggesting the addition of more items specifically on disposition or belief dimensions to their Multicultural Teaching Scale to test whether there is a third, attitudinal, component of cultural competence. Spanierman et al. (2011) encouraged researchers to use a combination of MTCS with the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS), designed by Ponterotto and his collaborators (Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera, 1998), as an assessment method of the proposed three dimensions of multicultural competence (Spanierman et al., 2011: 457).

These recommendations are further supported by a recent literature review of multicultural measurements suitable for use in the HE context, which considered Sue's tripartite multicultural competence model as a solid theoretical basis and encouraged its use for successful multicultural research conduction and instrumentation (Sarraj et al., 2015).

I would argue that the attitudinal dimension cannot be missing either from the definition of or a tool for measuring pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. The literature makes that even clearer, with some authors going as far as claiming that recognition and awareness of one's own culture and its influence on attitudes, worldviews, behaviour and expectations is the first step for the acquisition of multicultural competence (Banks, 1994; Guo, Lund, & Arthur, 2009; Burt, Ortlieb, & Cheek, 2009; Keengwe, 2010).

The importance given to attitudes might explain Sue's (2001: 815-816) observation that research conducted so far on the topic of multicultural competence tends to focus on the dimensions of knowledge and attitudes (e.g. Acquah & Commins, 2013), neglecting the area of skills. Within the educational context, I would personally go one step further, saying that the vast majority of studies solely examine the attitudinal strand (e.g. Bodur, 2012; Garmon, 2004, 2005; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Reiter & Davis, 2011; Szabo & Anderson, 2009; Tinkler & Tinkler, 2013; Unruh & McCord, 2010), keeping up the trend identified previously in the meta-analytic study of Trent et al. (2008), examining research on pre-service teachers' preparation for cultural diversity conducted between 1997-2006. This meta-analysis provides some more points worth taking into consideration.

More specifically, this meta-analysis concludes that pre-service teachers' multicultural preparedness has predominantly been examined using small samples and qualitative approaches (Trent et al., 2008: 332). Reviewing a body of more recent studies on the topic, the majority remains qualitative in nature (Seidl et al., 2016; Skepple, 2014; Dervin, 2017; Dervin & Hahl, 2015; Guo et al., 2009; Lehman, 2016; Rissanen et al., 2016), with five studies employing solely quantitative measurements (Cui, 2016; Garrote Salazar & Fernández Agüero, 2016; Liang & Zhang, 2009; Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2016; Nadelson et al., 2012) and five following a mixed-methods approach (Acquah & Commins, 2013, 2017; Fu, Wang, & Bieger, 2017; Perkins, 2012; Still & Squires, 2015). As becomes clear, studies employing a mixed-methods approach are still not very popular, although they are strongly recommended as a means of providing a more cohesive description of pre-service teachers'

multicultural competence (Cherng & Davis, 2017; Perkins, 2012; Spanierman et al., 2011; Nadelson et al., 2012). Moreover, the vast majority of studies carried out so far utilise small samples from single institutional backgrounds, adopting mainly a pre-post test approach to look at difference brought up in multicultural competence by a single experience (for a focus on single-module attendance see Still & Squires, 2015; Dervin, 2017; Dervin & Hahl 2015; Acquah & Commins, 2013, 2017, Rissanen et al., 2016; for a focus on a cultural immersion program see Seidl et al., 2016; Fu et al., 2017). Finally, it is worth mentioning that ten out of the sixteen recent studies examining multicultural competence are conducted in the American context with the remaining six being conducted in Europe (Acquah & Commins, 2013, 2017; Dervin, 2017; Dervin & Hahl, 2015; Rissanen et al. 2016; Garrote Salazar & Fernández Agüero, 2016). Interestingly enough though, none of the research on European studies focuses on Southern European countries, despite the significant demographic changes they have been undergone during the last 30 years, mostly due to influxes of incoming migrants, and the educational challenges they face in terms of diversity integration within this 'new' multicultural reality.

The present study is going to address all the aforementioned points. First of all, instead of focusing only at an individual aspect of the concept, this study is going to examine multicultural competence as a whole, taking into account all its three aspects of knowledge, attitudes and skills, following the theoretical framework of Sue (2001; Sue et al., 1982) and previous studies using this (Liang & Zhang, 2009; Spanierman et al., 2011; Fu et al., 2017). Secondly, based on recent studies that highlight the need for mixed-methods research on the topic as the best way to understand pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and inform meaningful changes in teacher preparation curricula (Cherng & Davis, 2017; Perkins, 2012; Spanierman et al., 2011; Nadelson et al., 2012), this study will adopt a mixed-methods approach as a means of holistically approaching the topic under research. Quantitative data will be used to respond to the need for tracing "webs of connections" (Holloway et al., 2010: 595) between the various experiences, processes, spaces and actors (Holloway et al., 2011; Holloway & Jöns 2012) influencing multicultural competence. Qualitative data will be used complimentary, in an attempt to get a deeper look into the multi-faceted concept of multicultural competence and the various factors influencing it, by bringing students' voices at the forefront. All in all, drawing upon the call of Holloway et al. (2011), the use of a mixed-methods approach as described above, forms a fruitful merge of geographies of youth

and education in an attempt to understand how subjectivities, personal experiences, as well as educational contexts with their processes and actors all interact in shaping learning experiences.

Moreover, this study will examine a variety of institutional backgrounds, employ a large sample size and examine the effect of the whole diversity-related education provided as part of the university-training, thus focusing on senior pre-service teachers (i.e. in the end of their last semester of undergraduate studies). Furthermore, as multicultural competence is context-dependent (Deardorff, 2009; Portera, 2014; Sue, 2001), it is logical to expect that research conducted within different national and educational contexts may yield diverse findings (Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014). Thus, the present study is going to focus on the under-researched Southern European context, looking specifically at the case study of Greece, an increasingly multicultural context (Triandafyllidou, 2000), which is challenged to respond to diversity integration in both the societal and educational level but has been found to underachieve in terms of teacher preparation for diversity (Council of Europe, 2008b). Finally, this study does not only examine pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, but also provides evidence on the factors influencing its development. Thus, before providing more information regarding the choice of the case study, the following section is going to focus on factors considered influential for multicultural competence, so as to justify the ones chosen for inclusion in the present study.

2.2. Factors Influencing Pre-Service Teachers' Multicultural Competence

Multicultural competence cannot be examined as happening only at a particular point in time, in a single space (Portera, 2014; Quinlan & Deardorff, 2016; Sue, 2001) or as being influenced by a single factor. On the contrary, it should be critically examined "in relation to wider sets of social processes" (Robertson, 2010: 6) and as "differentially experienced" (ibid: 10).

For this reason, a variety of different factors should be taken into consideration, in order to address the diverse spaces, curricula and subjective experiences related to multicultural competence and its development. As delineated above, multicultural competence is a "learnt" competence, constantly developing throughout one's life (Portera, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015; Sue & Torino, 2005) and thus it should be treated as a learning experience. According to sociocultural understandings of learning currently prevalent both within education studies and

the geographies of youth and education, learning experiences are understood as taking place on multiple timescales and spatial locations (Holloway & Jöns, 2012; Holloway et al., 2010, 2011; Sefton-Green, 2009; Leander et al. 2010), "from the microencounter of a conversation, […] to the macro-level articulation of identity narratives" (Bright et al., 2013: 751). Apart from the importance of the time-space continuum, the notion of subjectivity and subjective experiences is also key for learning (Holloway, 2014; Pyckett et al., 2010; Taylor, 2009), as diverse sociocultural backgrounds, experiences and personal attitudes produce diverse experiences of learning (Hull & Greeno, 2006). Finally, both formal and informal curricula are important, as learning is not influenced only by what is explicitly present in terms of content but is equally influenced by unspoken norms and practices (Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009; Holloway & Jöns, 2012).

Consequently, following the propositions of geographers of youth and education which highlight the importance of all the aforementioned for a holistic understanding of young people's learning experiences (Brooks et al., 2012; Holloway et al., 2011; Holloway & Jöns, 2012), interrelations between sociocultural background characteristics, subjective experiences, formal and informal spaces of education as well as formal and hidden curricula will be taken into consideration as factors influencing multicultural competence in the present study. More specifically, multicultural experiences and encounters, personal attitudes towards diversity, diversity-related modules attended during teacher training studies, experience of practical implementation of multicultural education during the teaching practicum as well as sociodemographic characteristics will be considered. The rest of this section will be devoted to providing more details and critically examine the research done so far in each one of the aforementioned strands.

2.2.1. Multicultural Experiences and Encounters

Multicultural experiences are pivotal for pre-service teachers' multicultural development (Garmon, 2004, 2005). However, most of the studies mention that pre-service teachers lack in such experiences when entering their teacher training program, as many of them have never experienced diversity in the neighbourhoods they lived in or the schools they attended (Milner, 2003; Howard, 2006; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Gay, 2010b; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Watson, Park, & Lee, 2011; Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). This lack of first-hand experience tends to reinforce stereotypical beliefs and attitudes towards diversity (Bell,

Horn, & Roxas, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Sleeter, 2001), an impeding factor for the development of multicultural competence.

Consequently, many studies have checked for the impact of multicultural experiences on multicultural competence or its attitudinal component. Foreign language competence, studying, living or working abroad and exposure to individuals of culturally diverse backgrounds are normally brought together to define such experiences (Garmon, 2005). Lopes-Murphy and Murphy (2016) found a positive correlation between pre- and in-service teachers' multicultural experience (measured as foreign language proficiency, study/travel abroad and culturally-diverse friends) and competence. Going one step further, Kahn, Lindstrom and Murray (2014) found that multicultural experiences, measured as having lived/worked abroad, been a minority member or worked in a community as a cultural minority, was the second most influential factor for the development of multicultural competence. Stebleton, Soria and Cherney (2013), examining for a variety of experiences of studying/travelling abroad for formal, informal education and recreational purposes found that all of them are important for multicultural competence development, with structured university formal study abroad programs through the university or through another partner provider being the most influential. Cui (2016) used foreign language proficiency and frequency of encounters with culturally diverse others as two distinct variables and found that they both exert a statistically significant effect on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence.

In the present study, all the aforementioned factors will be taken into consideration. Specifically, multicultural experiences are going to be divided in direct and indirect, with foreign language competence falling under the first category and travelling/studying abroad falling under the second. The consideration of experiences of travelling/studying abroad as influential for multicultural competence is also inspired by the geographic literature talking about the beneficial effect of mobilities on learning (e.g. Waters, 2017). Moreover, following the suggestion of Cui (2016), the present study is also going to examine the effect of number of culturally diverse friends.

The idea for the inclusion of multicultural friendship as a predictor influencing pre-service teachers' multicultural competence is based on Allport's Contact Theory (1954). Broadly speaking, the theory defines that meaningful intergroup contact, based on the equal standing

of the parties involved, has the potential to ameliorate attitudes towards perceived outgroups (ibid). The importance of equal standing of the parties involved is paramount. The sub-discipline of geographical studies looking particularly at different modes of intergroup contact and their effectiveness, geographies of encounters, make that clear by drawing a distinction between encounters and 'meaningful encounters', highlighting that proximity on its own does not necessarily translate into attitudinal or behavioural change (Neal & Vincent, 2013; Valentine, 2008) and that, instead, the equal power standing of the parties involved is quintessential for the encounters' effects and potential (Wessel, 2009; see also Wilson, 2017a for a comprehensive overview). Based on that, proxies of meaningful multicultural contact/encounters like multicultural friendship, have been utilised by educators and sociologists in research examining pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and its aspects. Nadeslon et al. (2012) found that direct encounters with culturally diverse people positively influence multicultural competence. Smith, Moallem and Sherrill (1997) found that pre-service teachers had greater multicultural awareness and sensitivity, when they had multicultural friendships, dated or were involved in sports with culturally diverse people. Seeberg and Minick (2012), using ICT to create virtual cross-cultural encounters during a multicultural course in a teacher training program, advocated for the beneficial effect of multicultural encounters in enhancing multicultural competence in teacher training programs. Dedeoglu and Lamme (2011) found multicultural friendships to exert a statistically significant, positive effect on pre-service teachers' personal and professional beliefs towards diversity, with Kahn et al. (2014) going one step further, finding multicultural relationships to be the most influential factor, when examining pre-service teachers' personal and professional beliefs towards diversity.

Human geographers have also pointed out the importance of multicultural encounters as potential catalysts for change (Wilson, 2017a) in buttressing stereotypes and/or promoting diversity-friendly attitudes and stances (Clayton, 2009; Ahmed, 2000; Leitner, 2012; Amin, 2002). Human geographers have used the concept of encounter to examine contact, during which a perceived difference between the subjects involved is present (Askins & Pain, 2011; Valentine, 2008). Multicultural encounters have attracted a lot of research interest within the contemporary context of super-diversity (e.g. Amin, 2002; Clayton, 2009; Swanton, 2010; Wilson, 2011, 2014a) as shaping but also being shaped by places, discourses and societal attitudes (Leitner, 2012; Wilson, 2017a). Encounters have been examined under a variety of

spaces (Leitner, 2012) including education (Ellis, Wright, & Parks, 2004; Neal & Vincent, 2013; Wilson, 2013a), neighborhoods (e.g. Nava, 2006; Amin, 2006; Valentine, 2010) and community settings (Phillips, 2006; Conradson, 2003; Valentine, 2008). They are understood as a site of "emergent pedagogy" (Wilson, 2017a: 456) due to the potential they bring for transforming misconceptions or prejudices related to perceived 'others' (Leitner, 2012; Schuermans, 2013; Wilson, 2017a) or for producing "new convivialities and knowledge" (Wilson, 2017a: 457). However, the causal relationships between encounters and their effects are not adequately addressed (Schuermans & Debruyne, 2017; Wilson, 2017b) and thus there is a call for more studies examining the mobilization of encounters to promote increased multicultural awareness (Wilson, 2013b, 2014b, 2017a).

Based on all the aforementioned, multicultural encounters are going to be included in the present study. More specifically, the effect of meaningful multicultural encounters and in particular that of multicultural friendships is going to be checked for. Friendship was chosen as it has been most commonly referenced as beneficial and necessary for generating positive outcomes in terms of intergroup relations (McLaren, 2003; Pettigrew, 1998), but, most importantly, because it has been previously used and identified as a suitable proxy for on-going, affective, meaningful encounters (Neal & Vincent, 2013). Incorporating multicultural encounters provides the chance for making an argument regarding the geographies of the effects of encounters (Schuermans & Debruyne, 2017). In other words, if multicultural friendships are found to exert an effect on multicultural competence, this will denote that the knowledge and attitudes produced through such encounters are transferrable and not bound to certain spaces or time.

All in all, by operationalising multicultural experiences through three distinct factors, this study can provide insights on the interrelation between foreign language competence, travelling/studying abroad and multicultural encounters. Most importantly, though, the distinction between the various forms of multicultural experiences will distinguish the effects they have on each other as well as on multicultural competence. This is particularly relevant as Pöllman (2013, 2014) encouraged research that would clarify the relational network between indirect and direct multicultural experiences, multicultural encounters and multicultural competence, which are all considered different forms of what he calls "intercultural capital". Moreover, the consideration of these elements as influential for multicultural competence follows the literature on the prominent mobilities approach to

education (Waters, 2017). According to this approach, education is not only confined to 'places' but is also related to the circulation of people, ideas and capital (ibid). So, it is hypothesised that greater foreign language competence, more experience of travelling/studying abroad and more multicultural encounters will predict higher multicultural competence.

2.2.2. Personal Beliefs towards Diversity: Attachment to National Homogeneity

In an attempt to highlight the importance of personal beliefs towards diversity for pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, Nieto (2000) states that one should firstly become a multicultural person to then be able to become a multicultural teacher. Teachers' personal beliefs about diversity are of particular importance in that respect, especially after bearing in mind that teachers' beliefs appear to be related to instructional practices (Kumar & Hamer, 2013; Richardson, 1996; Gay, 2010a; Milner, 2010) and the academic progress of their students (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Griffiths & Albutt, 2011). To name just an example of what this relationship may translates into, there are studies which conclude that the lower the stereotypical attitudes that pre-service teachers endorse regarding culturally diverse students, the less likely they are to hold biased expectations concerning the latter's academic achievement (Jussim & Harber, 2005; Schneider, Martinez, & Owens, 2006; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007; Kumar & Hamer, 2013).

A whole body of literature, initiated by Pohan (1994), deals specifically with examining pre-service teachers attitudes towards diversity at a personal and/or professional level (Cardona Moltó, Florian, Rouse, & Stough, 2010; Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, & Flowers, 2003; Dee & Henkin, 2002) and the interrelation between the two (Pohan, 1996; Pohan & Aguilar, 2001; Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011; Chiner, Cardona-Moltó, & Gómez Puerta, 2015; Kahn et al., 2014). The background logic for these studies is based on research findings according to which many of the pre-service teachers enter teacher training programs with negative or deficit attitudes and beliefs towards people from a diverse sociocultural background (Hollins & Guzman, 2005: 511). Also, teacher expectations about student achievement are found to be guided by personal pre-existing beliefs about learning, the nature of society and culture (Pajares, 1992; Cardona Moltó et al., 2010). Pre-existing beliefs about race, culture, society and teaching serve for pre-service teachers as filters through which new knowledge and experiences are mediated (Dervin, 2017; Hoolingsworth, 1989; Richardson, 1996). Thus, the main argument is that if pre-service teachers do not hold positive attitudes about diverse

cultures and abide to stereotypes, they will also have a negative stance towards diverse students, expect less from them or explain differences in scholastic achievement from a cultural-deficit perspective.

Relevant research findings are controversial regarding the relationship between personal and professional beliefs. Some studies show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between personal and professional attitudes towards diversity (Pohan, 1994; 1996; Pohan & Aguilar, 2001; Schroeder, 2008; Kahn et al., 2014). Others show greater tolerance towards diversity in the personal level than in the professional one (Giambo & Szecsi, 2007; Chiner et al., 2015). In general, it seems that personal attitudes do correlate with professional attitudes towards diversity.

Attachment to national homogeneity could be considered as a subset of personal attitudes toward diversity. Although found to predict hostile attitudes towards diversity in countries where an ethnic conceptualisation of national belonging (i.e. common culture/religion/language/descent) prevails (see Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2015 for the Netherlands; Sotiropoulou, 2014 for Greece), this concept has never been utilised in studies examining pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. As the concept seems especially suitable for the educational context, as an identity-shaping space (Collins & Coleman, 2008) where social norms such as the terms of national belonging are (re)produced (ibid; Cook & Hemming, 2011; Mavroudi & Holt, 2015; Murray, 2008), this study proposes its mobilisation as an alternative for personal attitudes towards diversity. This is also in line with the suggestion to conduct research on the links between formal education, intercultural capital - one aspect of which is multicultural competence (Pöllman, 2014)- and attachment to national homogeneity made by Pöllman (2009: 539-540, 542), in an attempt to understand better the interrelation between "people's habitus of national attachment", education and embodied "intercultural capital". To conclude, examining the Greek context, in which national belonging is conceptualised in terms of common language, religion and descent (Kakos & Palaiologou, 2014), there are good reasons to hypothesise that greater attachment to national homogeneity will predict lower levels of multicultural competence among pre-service teachers.

2.2.3. Diversity-Related Modules Attended during Teacher Training Studies

As previously mentioned, pre-service teachers are usually found to enter their teacher training lacking in multicultural experiences, knowledge concerning institutional racism, holding stereotypical attitudes towards diversity and viewing the society and the dominant cultural group in a utopian way (Sleeter, 2001; Guo et al., 2009; Weisman & Garza, 2002; Carpenter, 2000; Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000; Sue, 2011). As a means of remedying this poor background, a lot of teacher training departments and educational policies have initiated the incorporation of diversity-related modules in the university teacher training curricula (Nadelson et al., 2012; Reiter & Davis, 2011; Gorski, 2009a; Milner et al., 2003). Despite the aforementioned change initiated on a program level so that educators will be better prepared to address multicultural classrooms, research examining the effectiveness of this change on the levels of multicultural preparedness (i.e. competence) of pre-service teachers at the end of their studies is scarce (Reiter & Davis, 2011). On the contrary, many studies focus on the micro-level of individual multicultural modules attended. Thus, a large portion of the relevant studies have an experimental design, utilizing pre- and post-tests in order to evaluate the effect of diversity related modules attended on multicultural competence or its aspects (e.g. Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Seeberg & Minick, 2012; Weisman & Garza, 2002; Acquah & Commins, 2017,2013; Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011; Frye, Button, Kelly, & Button, 2010). However, research outcomes are inconclusive, with some studies finding a positive effect between multicultural modules attended and aspects of multicultural competence (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Lawrence, 1997; Pohan, 1996; Weisman & Garza, 2002; Acquah & Commins, 2013, 2017; Kumar & Hammer, 2013), while others account for no statistically significant relationship between the two (Ahlquist, 1992; Goodwin, 1994; Causey et al., 2000; McDiarmid, 1990; Locke, 2005; Ambosia, Sequin, & Hogan, 2001; Nadelson et al., 2012; Reiter & Davis, 2011).

To name just a few more specific examples, Lawrence (1997) found that after attending even one diversity-related module, pre-service teachers ameliorated their attitudes, which in turn translated into some successful multicultural teaching during their teaching practice. Weisman and Garza (2002) similarly found that a single module ameliorated pre-service teachers' awareness of societal inequalities and attitudes concerning diversity in general as well as diversity within the classroom context more specifically. A variety of other studies support that attending a single multicultural module significantly influences pre-service

teachers' attitudes towards culturally diverse students in a positive way (Grant & Secada, 1990; Acquah & Commins, 2013). However, other studies posit that attending a single multicultural module is not enough, as only exposure to various modules is beneficial (Milner et al., 2003; Banks & McGee Banks, 2010). Somewhere in between, Pohan (1996) found that the more modules one attends, the better his/her personal and professional attitudes toward diversity are. Similarly, Bodur (2012) concluded that the more multicultural education pre-service teachers receive, the more positively their attitudes and sense of efficacy concerning teaching in socio-culturally diverse settings are influenced. Finally, Kumar and Hamer (2013) in their sequential study evaluating pre-service teachers' attitudes towards culturally diverse students found that after completing three modules throughout their teaching preparation program, all students have ameliorated their attitudes.

Although research is carried out on the effect of the amount of diversity related modules attended on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, fewer studies examine the effect of module content (Zirkel, 2008 as cited by Castellanos & Cole, 2015: 794). A lot of researchers emphasise the importance of course content by saying that meaningful diversity related modules should engage student teachers in self-reflection (Castro, 2010; Bodur, 2012) and a variety of real-life cross-cultural experiences (Keengwe, 2010; Seeberg & Minick, 2012) rather than relying on the mere acquisition of abstract knowledge about diversity (Acquah & Commins, 2013; Pohan, 1996; Noordhof & Kleinfeld, 1993; Sleeter, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Powell, Zehm, & Garcia, 1996; Sperandio, Grudzinski-Hall, & Stewart-Gambino, 2010; Hachfeld, Hahn, Schroeder, Anders, & Kunter, 2015). Dedeoglu and Lamme (2011) more generally acknowledge the importance of multicultural experience and suggest that teacher training departments should organise programs or projects that will involve both pre-service teachers and culturally diverse populations so that a multicultural appreciation can be fostered in practice between the two (see also Phoon, Abdullah, & Abdullah, 2013: 436). In relation to that, in a study examining the effect of a cross-cultural partnership program between pre-service teachers and international English Language Learners on the formers' multicultural competence, all participants praised the experience (Keengwe, 2010: 203). Moreover, pre-service teachers themselves recognise the beneficial role of practical components. In the qualitative study of Guo et al. (2009), pre-service teachers' identified field experiences and teaching in diverse settings as the most influential factors in developing their multicultural competence. Furthermore, some pre-service teachers suggested the

inclusion of more relevant experiences in teacher training programs, like meaningful field observations in culturally diverse classrooms, in order to be better prepared to address multicultural classrooms (Keengwe, 2010). Unfortunately, though, it seems that multicultural knowledge keeps on being conveyed in teacher education in traditional ways, relying, for example, on course readings (Seeberg & Minick, 2012).

To conclude, regarding the effect of diversity-related training at a university level, Pohan (1996) aptly states that simply adding a course or two to the existing teacher education curricula may in fact do more harm than good, if the content is based on a superficial coverage of diversity issues. On the contrary, multicultural elements and experiences should be infused throughout the teacher training program (Gay, 1997; Seeberg & Minick, 2012; Guo et al., 2009; Lund, 1998; Milner et al., 2003) instead of solely including "sporadic, fragmentary, or optional extras" to address diversity issues (Phunstog, 1995:10). Consequently, based on the importance of diversity-related courses for pre-service teachers as an initial experience of explicitly dealing with issues of diversity in education and/or the wider context, this study is going to take the number of modules attended into consideration. However, this is going to be combined with the module content elements in an attempt to combine quantity with quality for generating more insightful perspectives. The general hypothesis formed on that basis is that the more and richer in content diversity-related modules one attends, the higher his/her multicultural competence will be.

2.2.4. Practical Implementation of Multicultural Education: The Teaching Practicum Experience

As delineated above, diversity-related courses mostly aim at ameliorating pre-service teachers' knowledge and attitudes. Multicultural competence is thus firstly situated in the space of university training. However, the component of skills is less frequently addressed through modules. This is probably because skills' acquisition is bounded with some sort of practical experience, based on constructivist understandings of learning, according to which internalisation of knowledge and learning in general comes with individuals being actively involved in 'doing' (Biggs, 1996). Thus, it seems logical to assume that multicultural educational experiences with a practical component are also going to be influential for pre-service teachers' multicultural competence development.

The literature on multicultural service-learning experiences specifically supports the aforementioned argument regarding the importance of combining theory with practice. Multicultural service-learning experiences are in substance field experiences in diverse, multicultural settings and are often the supplement of diversity-related university modules offered by teacher preparation programs (Sleeter, 2001), predominantly in the United States. More specifically, relevant experiences have been found to benefit pre-service teachers' diversity awareness (Anderson, Swick, & Yff, 2001; Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007; Bell et al., 2007; Boyle-Baise, 2005; Burant & Kirby, 2002; Wade, 2000), receptiveness (Boyle-Baise, 1998) and social-justice orientation (Brown, 2005) or all of the aforementioned (Tinkler & Tinkler, 2013). A number of other studies mentions the beneficial role of modules that combine coursework with practical field experiences (e.g. Barnes, 2006; Bodur, 2012; Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011; Kyles & Olafson, 2008). The acknowledgment of the beneficial role of practical multicultural educational experiences by pre-service teachers themselves further supports the importance of diversity-oriented practical experiences. Pre-service teachers in the qualitative studies of Guo et al. (2009) and Skepple (2014) specifically identified teaching in diverse settings as the most influential factor in developing their multicultural competence.

However, in general, the gist of pre-service teachers' accounts is that teacher training provides them with diversity-related theory, but not real-life experiences. This gap between theory and practice can be perceived as a contradiction between the formal and the informal curriculum within teacher training studies. In other words, the inclusion of diversity-related modules as part of the official teacher training curriculum and the rhetoric regarding their importance are meaningless if practical implementation of multicultural education is not encouraged or provided for. This contradiction conveys the important message that "[w]hile the design and administration of the [formal] curriculum is important, so too are the informal lessons which students learn […]" (Holloway et al. 2010, 588).

An indicative space that can greatly influence the importance attached to multicultural competence and its usefulness among pre-service teachers is that of the teaching practicum. As Kourti and Androussou (2013) explained, examining the Greek context, when pre-service teachers experience the limited applicability of diversity-related curriculum in everyday practice during their teaching placements, they express doubts about, if not resist, the usefulness of the knowledge acquired from diversity-related modules in their future career as

educators. This seems logical as multicultural competence might be taught in the university space, but the final aim is for it to be embodied and implemented by the pre-service teachers in the school classrooms.

The first chance for pre-service teachers to enact multicultural competence is the teaching practicum experience. Based on the aforementioned evidence, the present study will also examine the importance of perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to teaching practicum. In other words, it is hypothesised that student-teachers who have either been encouraged to use or experienced the implementation of multicultural education as part of their teaching practicum will have heightened multicultural competence.

2.2.5. Sociodemographic and Personal Background Characteristics

Richardson (1996: 105) posited that it is logical to claim that "ethnic and socioeconomic background, gender [and] geographic location […] may all affect an individual's beliefs that, in turn, affect learning to teach and learning". Similarly, Banks (2003) highlights the importance of positionality, referring to the influence that gender, ethnoracial and socioeconomic background, place of residence as well as political orientation have on educators' multicultural learning and teaching practices. Based on the aforementioned points, most of the studies carried out examining preservice teachers' multicultural competence or its aspects include controls for the impact of sociodemographic and personal background characteristics.

As far as gender is concerned, Pettus and Allain (1999) found that women hold more favourable attitudes toward diversity and issues related to multicultural education compared to men. Tompkins, Crook, Miller, and LePeau (2017) also found that females scored higher than males in multicultural competence, examining undergraduate students of a midwestern university in the United States. Ford and Quinn (2010), examining first year pre-service teachers in the USA, concluded that women gave more importance to the need for multicultural awareness and implementation of multicultural practices compared to their male counterparts. Similarly, Turner (2007) in her study examining American pre-service teachers' multicultural personal and professional beliefs found that women scored higher in both compared to their male counterparts. Moreover, the gender difference persisted even after the completion of a diversity related course, in which both genders showed improvement (ibid). Contrary findings were reported by Polat and Ogay Barka (2014) in their study examining

pre-service teachers' multicultural competence in Turkey and Switzerland, where gender had no statistically significant effect. Regarding the effect of ethnicity, reviewing empirical research evidence on preparing pre-service teachers for multicultural classrooms, Sleeter (2001) found that teachers of colour are more culturally aware and committed to the practical implementation of multicultural education than their white counterparts in America. Regarding socio-economic status, the background logic of including the variable is that previous findings among university students have shown individuals from a more affluent and higher-educated background have more indirect and direct multicultural experiences, endorse cosmopolitan attitudes and show openness and curiosity for other cultures compared to their lower-status counterparts (Aba, 2016). Place of residence has previously been found to influence multicultural competence through multicultural experience, with individuals growing up in more multicultural spaces, having more multicultural experiences and higher multicultural competence compared to their counterparts coming from more homogenous settings (Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2016). Finally, reading the effect of political orientation, Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith and Sullivan (1997), in their study examining social studies teachers, claimed that those identifying with conservative political stances tended to favour assimilation and resist multicultural education. Hollins and Guzman (2005) further supported the idea of the influence of political ideologies on pre-service teachers' perspectives on diversity issues.

A more recent study included all the aforementioned personal characteristics examining American pre-service teachers' multicultural attitudes and efficacy (Nadelson et al., 2012). Findings showed no statistically significant relationship between gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, place of residence and multicultural efficacy but a significant effect was identified between political orientation and multicultural attitudes. The effect identified translated into more liberal orientation predicting more multicultural perspectives. In the present study, the same group of personal characteristics are going to be included, with the addition of previous educational achievement. The latter variable has previously been identified as specifically relevant for pre-service teachers' multicultural development in Greece. More specifically, in the study of Spinthourakis and her collaborators (Spinthourakis, Karatzia-Stavlioti, & Roussakis 2009), previous educational achievement, measured as secondary school graduation grade, was found to exert a statistically significant effect on Greek pre-service teachers' intercultural sensitivity. The hypothesis formed regarding the

effect of personal characteristics on multicultural competence is that pre-service teachers that are women, ethnically diverse, of a higher status, from urban settings, with high previous educational achievement and liberal political orientation are going to be more multiculturally competent compared to male pre-service teachers, those of Greek origin, lower socio-economic status, permanently residing in a rural setting, with low secondary education graduation grades and right-wing political views.

To conclude, several studies have been carried out so far taking into consideration the effect of multicultural experiences, personal beliefs towards diversity, diversity-related training received during university studies and personal characteristics on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence or its components. The present study, however, aims to go a step further by systematically combining all the aforementioned variables together as a better way to examine multicultural competence and the factors influencing it. In other words, it is hypothesised that taking all the aforementioned variables into consideration provides a better picture of multicultural competence development among pre-service teachers than the one provided by studies focusing solely on one or some of the aforementioned variables. This approach is fully in line with the methodological proposition made by Holloway et al. (2010: 595), according to which, instead of focusing on specific sites, tracing "webs of connections" between different spaces of education and diverse individuals' experiences can offer a more nuanced understanding of how learning is experienced. Rather than focusing solely on the institutional context, this study examines the effect of a range of learning contexts and individual experiences (Holloway et al., 2010; Holloway & Jöns, 2012), which are not usually brought together in one methodological framework (Hull & Schultz, 2001).

The construction of this framework follows the literature on geographies of education, according to which, a holistic approach, capturing the effects of diverse spaces of learning and their educational curricula as well as subjectivities is a better way of examining how young people experience learning (Holloway & Jöns, 2012; Basu, 2011; Pyckett et al., 2010; Sefton-Green, 2009; Leander et al., 2010; Bright et al., 2013). Such an approach takes into consideration experiences of pre-service teachers within and outside the university setting (Holloway et al., 2010, 2011) as well as the influence of formal and hidden educational curricula (Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009) for the development of pre-service teachers' multicultural competency. All in all, the consideration of the combined influence of diverse

spaces, experiences, processes and actors is an important contribution that a geographic approach has to offer on the study of multicultural competence and the factors influencing it.

2.3. Greece as a Case Study

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this study examines pre-service multicultural competence and the factors influencing its development in the Greek context. With the country being only recently transformed from an emigration point to an immigration destination since the beginning of the 1990s (Triandafyllidou, 2000; Chalari & Georgas, 2016), Greece forms an increasingly multicultural context, different from the traditional multicultural societies of the United States of America and Canada in which multicultural competence research has been primarily conducted so far. However, the Greek context can be related to the rest of the so-called "countries of new immigration" in Southern Europe (i.e. Italy, Spain and Portugal), which also face challenges in terms of diversity integration both in societal and educational level as an outcome of their transformation from emigration to immigration countries in the last 30 years (Pugliese, 2011: 100). Following the same transition and challenges due to their increasingly multicultural demographics, the countries belonging to the so-called Southern European (King, 2000) or Mediterranean model of migration (Pugliese, 2011) have vastly used the same discourse to frame the new multicultural reality established, framing incoming migrants as a problem, highlighting their "illegal" status, and considering them an economic threat for the native population in terms of employment and welfare provisions (ibid: 100). Finally, these countries have also employed similar integration policies, providing restricted access to citizenship rights for non-nationals and promoting an understanding of belonging as conforming to the cultural majority norms (ibid: 103-104).

This chapter provides detailed information on the abovementioned aspects focusing on Greece. More specifically, the initial part of this chapter describes the general societal level in an attempt to highlight that, although Greek society has progressively become more heterogeneous, Greek national identity has, unfortunately, remained vastly ethnocentric and xenophobic, with the prevalent attitudes towards people with an ethnoculturally diverse background and their belonging being exclusionary, based on processes of 'othering' (Chalari & Georgas, 2016). Section 2.3.1. delves into the description of mainstream understandings regarding Greek national belonging and the representation of the 'other'. The two following subsections (2.3.1.1. and 2.3.1.2.) provide more details in terms of the political discourse and

public attitudes towards diversity in Greece. Finally, section 2.3.1.3. is devoted to the conditions of belonging for individuals with an ethnoculturally diverse background in contemporary Greece. Moreover, it contains some concluding remarks regarding the multicultural reality in Greece and the prevalent conceptualisations of migrants and refugees as the new visible 'others' within the national 'we'.

The remaining part of this chapter moves the focus to the educational context in an attempt to highlight the links between the Greek national education and the (re)production of exclusionary understandings of Greek national identity (Chalari & Georgas, 2016). Specifically, these sections show how, although the Greek student population keenly reflects the multicultural reality currently present in terms of population demographics, the educational structures remain ethnocentric, (re)producing exclusionary understandings of belonging through curricula, textbooks and provisions targeted to students with a culturally diverse background. Section 2.3.2. provides information in terms of the demographics of the culturally diverse students present within the Greek educational context. Section 2.3.2.1. delves into the orientation and content of educational curricula and textbook currently in place, in an attempt to highlight the tendency towards ethnocentrism instead of multiculturalism (Stratoudaki, 2008). Section 2.3.2.2. introduces the most popular diversity management strategies employed by the Greek state as a means of integrating culturally diverse students, namely reception/tutorial classes, intercultural schools and actions programs, showing the prevalence given to Greek language learning and the tendency to exclude ethnoculturally diverse students from regular classrooms. Finally and most importantly, section 2.3.2.3. provides an overview of the initial teacher training provisions in Greece, highlighting the general lack of multicultural perspective in their curricular design, in an attempt to understand why examining pre-service teachers' multicultural competence in Greece is important.

2.3.1. Describing 'Us' and the 'Other' in the Greek Society

The conceptualization of Greek national identity is based on ethnic terms, meaning that Greeks are defined by common descent and not by residency within the Greek territory (Macris, 2012; Chalari & Georgas, 2016). 'Greekness' is defined by a Greek national consciousness, embedded in common ancestry and cultural tradition, the Orthodox religion and Greek language (Chalari & Georgas, 2016; Triandafyllidou & Veikou, 2002; Christopoulos, 2013a; Faas, 2011a). The national narrative is based on an alleged continuity,

whose origin is old enough to be lost in history, and on the perceived superiority of the Greek nation "to almost any other nation in the world since Greeks are the heirs of almost all the great civilizations of the West (Ancient Greek, Hellenistic/Alexander the Great, Eastern Roman/Byzantium)" (Chrysoloras, 2004: 52). This background logic of Greek national identity formation and the relevant dominant discourse has promoted a highly exclusionary, mono-ethnic/cultural conceptualisation of belonging (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011).

Within this ethnic conceptualisation of national belonging, the role of religion is paramount for understanding the Greek context (Chrysoloras, 2004). More specifically, despite the general trend of secularization characterizing Western world societies, Orthodoxy and Greekness remain inextricably linked (ibid; Efstathiou, Georgiadis, & Zisimos, 2008). Thus, the Greek constitution (Greek Parliament, 2013), although recognizing the right to religious freedom (article 16), also acknowledges Christian Orthodoxy as the established state religion in Greece (article 3). Moreover, the law 1566/1985 outlining the principles regarding the structure and operation of Greek public education privileges anew the distinct position of Orthodoxy (Efstathiou et al., 2008). Specifically, although the law recognises the importance of freedom of religion, article 1 states that the aim of Greek public education is, among others, to encourage students to build their faith in the authentic elements of the Christian Orthodox tradition. Consequently, it becomes clear that the intention of the Greek state is the development of the Christian Orthodox identity for its citizens, which, as mentioned above, together with Greek language and culture, is thought of as an integral part of Greek national identity and the national collective conscience (Karamouzis, 2014). That means that, as things currently stand, there is limited room for religious diversity within the mainstream conceptualisations and (re)productory structures of Greek national belonging.

The important role of Orthodox religion in defining 'us' has been constructed through a traditional opposition particularly towards the Muslim faith. The latter has been connected to 'otherness' in mainstream understandings of Greek national identity, as the defining characteristic of the Ottoman Empire, which in Greek national identity building is often conflated with the Turks (Chrysoloras, 2004). Despite the presence of Muslims within Greek territory (in Western Thrace) since the Lausanne Convention in 1923 and the unique status of the community as the only officially recognised minority by the Greek state (Karakatsani & Pavlou, 2013), Muslim identity is still viewed as 'other', incompatible with the national 'we' (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011; Palaiologou & Faas, 2012). It is worth mentioning

regarding the minority population in Western Thrace how it is homogenised under the religiously defined collective identity-term ‘Muslim minority’ (Konidari, 2017), although it is comprised of three different ethnic subgroups; Muslims of Turkish origin, forming the majority, followed by Pomaks (i.e. Slavophone Muslims) and Roma Muslims (Palaiologou & Faas, 2012). As becomes clear, the Muslim religious identity trumps all other in this case. Formal and informal forms of discrimination against this minority group of 100,000-120,000 people (United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour, 2018) remain a serious concern (ECRI, 2015). The process of ‘othering’ that this group is submitted to relates to the omnipresent rivalry between Greeks and Muslims/Turks (Theodossopoulos, 2006; Efstathiou et al., 2008), stemming from the Ottoman occupation of Greece for 400 years, between 1453 and 1821. This period forms a basic element of the Modern Greek history construction, as the revolution of 1821 led to the establishment of the Modern Greek nation-state in 1830 and the respective formation of Greek national identity (Chrysoloras, 2004). The Ottoman occupation and the revolutionary battles form an integral part of the History educational curricula in Greece, with hostility being (re)produced towards the Muslim faith, through its connection to Turks, on the grounds of the suppression of the Orthodox religious identity and Greek language (Chrysoloras, 2004; Theodossopoulos, 2006; Efstathiou et al., 2008). All in all, the general message promoted is that the Muslim faith is connected to the ‘enemy’ and needs to be excluded. Thus, based on their Muslim faith, even the historic minority of Muslims has been subjugated to a process of ‘othering’, being confined in the territory of Western Thrace and having a distinct, marginal positionality in mainstream understandings of Greek national belonging (Kakos and Palaiologou, 2014).

Despite the presence of the aforementioned minority group and the historical presence of the Roma population in the country, mainly residing in its suburbs (ibid), Greece was perceived as a ‘culturally homogenous’ society up until the late 1980s – beginning of 1990s (Frangoudaki & Dragonas, 2000; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011; Maniatis, 2012). However, at the beginning of the 1990s, Greece started receiving a substantial amount of repatriated Greeks. Under this category fall approximately 150.000 Pontiacs of Greek descent, which migrated to Greece from the former Soviet Union and mainly Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Armenia after the end of the Cold War (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011: 402), approximately 240.000 ethnic Greeks from Southern Albania (Palaiologou & Faas, 2012: 565) and a smaller number of returning Greeks from Northern Europe, the USA, Canada and

Australia (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011: 402). In addition, incoming flows of economic immigrants from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa as well as refugees from the Middle East were bound to impact the demography of Greek population "significantly and irreversibly" (Palaiologou & Faas, 2012: 564). Greece gradually transformed from an emigration to an immigration country (Maronitis, 2017) in a very short time, following the rest of the Southern European countries included in the so-called "new countries of immigration" (Pugliese, 2011: 100; see also Castles & Miller, 2009: 108-109).

According to the data available from the latest Census carried out in 2011, non-Greek nationals made up almost 8.5% of the country's total population (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2014). Among them, Albanians formed the largest immigrant group (480,000), representing 52% of Greece's total immigrant population, with Bulgarians (75,000), Romanians (46,000), Pakistanis (34,000), Georgians (27,000), Ukrainians (17,000) and Poles (14,000) following (ibid). A more recent population breakdown provided by the Ministry of Interior in 2016 showed that Albanians are still the largest immigrant group in Greece, accounting for nearly 70% of the country's total, with Ukrainians and Georgians following far behind (Megrelis, 2017). According to the most recent data available by Eurostat, the total immigrant population residing in Greece has risen to 11.6% in 2017 (Eurostat, 2017), with the vast majority of them originating from non-EU countries (8.4%).

Apart from the immigrants legally residing or entering the country, Greece has also been facing an unprecedented influx of undocumented immigrants and refugees (Kasimis, 2012) in the last 10 years. According to Maroukis (2012), around 391,500 undocumented immigrants were residing in Greece in 2011. However, geopolitical developments brought by the Arab spring in 2011, the fall of the Libyan regime, the conflict in Syria and the overall instability in the Middle East have produced intense migratory flows anew (Triandafyllidou, Maroufof, Dimitriadi, & Yousef, 2014), especially after 2015. These new migratory flows to Greece are mainly comprised of asylum seekers, fleeing persecution from their war-torn countries (Triandafyllidou, 2017).

According to data available by the IOM (2015), the astonishing number of 857,363 undocumented migrants arrived in Greece in 2015, mainly using the Aegean islands as their entrance point, crossing with boats from Turkey (Triandafyllidou, 2017). This number dropped to 176,906 in 2016, as an outcome of the activation of the EU-Turkey Agreement in

March 2016, which "brought migration flows through the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkan route to a relative standstill" (IOM, 2016: 1), with only 62,784 of the incoming flux residing in Greece at the end of the year. In 2017, 54,225 migrants and asylum seekers were residing in Greece (IOM, 2017) with the number being slightly increased (56,549) in the latest data available (IOM, 2018). The top three nationalities reported among the incoming migrants to Greece are Syrians, followed by Afghanis and Iraqis (Triandafyllidou, 2017). It is clear that, since 2015, Greece has received a large number of migrants trying to make their way to Europe. Although the number of incoming migrants residing in the country has been significantly reduced as an outcome of the tightening of asylum, detention and bordering control policies brought by the EU-Turkey Agreement, the refugees' presence has steadily become highly visible. Greece currently hosts approximately 57,000 migrants and refugees that entered the country since 2015, with 28% of them residing in reception centres on islands and the rest 62% in various accommodation facilities and shelters across mainland Greece (IOM, 2018). The reality of refugees as permanent residents of Greece has come to the forefront, setting in motion political initiatives for their integration (Skleparis, 2017a; Howden, 2017).

Thus, since the 1990s, Greece has become an increasingly multicultural society, commonly referenced among the so-called "new countries of immigration" and the 'Mediterranean model of (im)migration' together with Italy, Spain and Portugal (Castles & Miller, 2009; King, 2000; Pugliese, 2011). However, instead of promoting refined understandings of national belonging to accommodate the mosaic of cultures present in the country, this new state of affairs established immigrants and refugees as the new socially visible 'other' for Greeks (Triandafyllidou & Mikrakis, 1995; Chalari & Georgas, 2016). In general, the representation of cultural diversity in Greece has come to be defined by the presence of the Muslim Minority in Thrace, the Roma population and immigrants (Trouki, 2012: 219), with the most recent addition being refugees and asylum seekers. After the 1990s, immigrants and refugees almost monopolise the repertoire of cultural diversity in Greece. Between the 1990s and 2000s, the basic axes of cultural diversity stemmed from differences in descent and language, primarily singling out the economic immigrants as people of non-Greek descent, not speaking the Greek language and less so the repatriates from the Former Soviet Union, who although not speaking Greek, due to their Greek descent, were more easily accepted (Triandafyllidou & Veikou, 2002). Among the incoming immigrants, Albanians were the

largest group and thus the least desirable and discriminated upon. This discrimination had mainly been promoted through a hostile media and political discourse (Maronitis, 2017). Baldwin-Edwards (2004) gives an idea of the farfetched mass media reports, which constructed a 'dangerous Albanian' stereotype. As Megrelis (2017) describes in more detail, numerous media stories accused Albanian immigrants of being responsible for a 'crime wave', although official data never corroborated these claims. As Tsaliki (2013) aptly puts it, Greek media coverage reified the connection between Albanian origin and 'trouble'.

However, after the political upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East and the mass refugee arrivals, religion has become anew one of the most prevalent axes for defining cultural difference in Greece (Maronitis, 2017). As the largest groups of incoming migrants that have arrived in Greece since 2015 come from Arab countries, in which Islam forms the majority religion, their arrival made 'Muslim' become 'visible' across Greece, disrupting the representation of Muslims being solely confined to Western Thrace (Kakos and Palaiologou, 2014), generating fear and hostility (Chatzipanagiotou & Zarikos, 2017). Media played again an important role in the aforementioned representation of the new migrants and refugees.

However, the media stance towards the new migrants has not been consistent and can be divided in three distinct responses, each corresponding to specific time periods (Megrelis, 2017). The first one, covering the summer of 2015, is characterised by a stereotypical representation of refugees. More specifically, refugees are indiscriminately grouped together with migrants, labelled as 'illegal immigrants' with no mention been made to their special rights for protection (ibid). The term 'tsunami' was used to create a 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972; Critcher, 2003), emphasising the amount of the incoming people, who were framed as a threat to public health, tourism, national security, the Greek cultural and religious identity as well as the country's population profile (Megrelis, 2017). Refugees were (re)presented as potential disease bearers and there was an implicit connection between their countries of origin, Muslim faith and terrorism. Between September 2015 and March 2016, the media coverage shifted completely, focusing on the humanitarian aspect and the tragedy of refugees fleeing their war-torn countries (ibid), influenced by the thousands of deaths caused by the sinking of boats carrying refugees in the Mediterranean and the circulation of photos of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned in transit and his body was washed ashore nearby the Turkish coast in September 2015 (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017). Refugees talking for themselves became the centre of media coverage, making it clear that Greece was

just a transit point for them in their way to other European countries (Megrelis, 2017). This shift was short living, though, as since March 2016, the media representation has fallen back to its hostile rhetoric regarding refugees. This reversal was triggered by the realization that the presence of refugees in Greece would be more permanent than initially thought. The EU-Turkey deal and closure of borders of European countries further North led to decreased incoming flows of refugees but also made it clear that people arriving in Greece will remain there at least until their asylum applications are processed for relocation or reunification with family members in other countries (Howden, 2017). This likelihood of having refugees stranded for a long period of time across Greece and, indeed, amidst the economic crisis, was one of the key reasons for the media shift (Megrelis, 2017). Thus, the coverage focused on the relocation of refugees form the islands in other accommodation facilities in mainland Greece. More specifically, there was a disproportionate representation of the public hostile reactions to the permanent presence of refugees, who were viewed anew as a threat to the living conditions of the locals and the country overall (ibid). Finally, their Muslim faith came to the forefront again as one of their basic attributes, denoting an inability to integrate into the national 'we' and an association with extremism and violence (Chatzipanagiotou & Zarikos, 2017).

To conclude, this section presented background information regarding the premises of Greek national identity and the rapid multicultural transformation the country has been experiencing since the beginning of the 1990s. The main point made is that, despite the country's population becoming progressively more heterogeneous, the Greek national identity and its relevant mainstream conceptualisations have not been extended to accommodate the multiculturalism currently present in the country. Thus, cultural diversity remains a trait associated with the perceived 'others' residing in Greece, namely mainly immigrants and refugees and less so Roma populations and the Muslims of Western Thrace, and is still understood as being of non-Greek descent, not speaking the Greek language and not being a Christian Orthodox.

2.3.1.1. Political Discourse towards Diversity in Greece

In general, Greek politics has been characterised by a long tradition of ethnocentric discourse fostering hostility towards diversity (Macris, 2012). This tradition is hard to break and is still widely present in the current Parliament. More specifically, left-wing party SYRIZA's rise to power coincided with that of the far-right wing party of Golden Dawn. Explicitly advocating

extreme ideas and blatantly supporting racist behaviours, Golden Dawn, self-defined as the only nationalist movement in Greece, first entered the Greek parliament following the May 2012 elections, receiving 6.97% of the total votes (Ministry of Interior, 2012a). There have been three national elections since (June 2012, January 2015 and September 2015) and the party has been consistently re-elected in each one (Ministry of Interior, 2012b; 2015a; 2015b). In the most recent elections, it ranked 3rd in the voters' preference, gathering 7% of the vote, which translated to 18 MPs (Ministry of Interior, 2015b). Golden Dawn's continued public appeal has not decreased, even after various criminal charges were pressed against some of its leading representatives. This seems to have encouraged politicians to continue to employ a discourse promotion hostility and intolerance towards migrants, in hopes of attracting voters (Baldwin-Edwards, 2014). The financial crisis has been used as a fertile ground for turning immigrants into scapegoats for populace's financial difficulties, with emphasis placed on illegal immigrants (despite many actually being refugees or bona-fide asylum seekers) or those who may have fallen into illegality due to unemployment (ibid).

This hostile discourse is not new to the Greek populace, though. Bohman's political parties' manifesto analysis (2013: 14, based on Klingemann, Volkens, Bara, Budge, & MacDonald, 2006) finds that, from 1990 to 2002, all Greek political parties held an equally hostile stance towards immigration, by placing an emphasis on a rhetoric of clear-cut distinction between 'us' and 'them'. The political discourse surrounding incoming migrants has been shaped by focusing on differences, distinguishing them from the national 'us' and presenting them as a negative element for the country (Triandafyllidou, 2000). Political stakeholders' discourse had previously gone so far as mentioning the employment of immigrants in the informal economic sector and their willingness to work long hours for extremely low wages as an argument to support the proposition that immigrants steal Greeks' jobs and undermine domestic workers' rights (ibid). Moreover, connections have regularly been drawn between immigrant cultures and social pathologies, such as criminality (ibid; Stratoudaki, 2008). In 2011, the Greek Minister for Citizen Protection publicly announced that a national increase in petty crime was the result of illegal immigration (Baldwin-Edwards, 2014). In his 2012 pre-election campaign, Antonis Samaras, the leader of the neoliberal party of New Democracy, who eventually won the elections and remained a member of the Parliament until he resigned in 2015, proclaimed that Greece had become a centre of illegal immigration and that he would reclaim Greek cities from immigrants (ibid).

The present government's discourse could definitely be considered an upgrade compared to its predecessors. The government formed in 2015 and is comprised of the coalition between the left-wing party 'SYRIZA (Radical Left Coalition)' and the right-wing party 'Independent Greeks (ANEL)'. However, if someone delves a bit more into the dynamics of the coalition and also looks at the rest of the parties represented in the Parliament, the picture becomes different. For example, when the new citizenship law granting access to citizenship to second generation migrants was finally approved in July 2015, three of the seven parties comprising the Greek Parliament voted against it. The law was opposed by the far-right party 'Golden Dawn', the previous majority party of 'New Democracy' and the 'ANEL' of the current coalition government. These voting patterns provide an indicative example of the controversies currently present around migrants' integration. Regarding the governing coalition in specific, within it lays a contradictory approach to migration (Megrelis, 2017) and diversity integration. On the one hand, there is the diversity-friendly 'SYRIZA', which initiated the laws granting citizenship to second generation migrants and access to resources for refugees. On the other hand, though, there is the nationalistic rhetoric of 'ANEL', and especially the party's leader and current Minister of Defence, Panos Kammenos, which favours the preservation of the alleged national homogeneity and is opposed to attempts aiming to redefine the Greek national self, so as to include the multiculturalism currently present within the country.

This section supported that political discourse is one of the causes that have (re)produced the 'othering' of people with an ethnoculturally diverse background in the Greek society, specifically targeting migrants and refugees. Even though the current government has taken some steps towards the official establishment of the multicultural nature of the Greek society through the initiation of access to citizenship for second generation migrants, this progressive stance has been compromised by the nationalistic stance and rhetoric adopted by other political parties present in the current Parliament.

2.3.1.2. Public Attitudes towards Diversity in Greece

Most of the studies conducted in Greece examining public attitudes towards diversity focus on perceptions of immigrants and refugees. According to several cross-national studies (e.g. Finseraas, 2012; Pew Research Centre, 2014; European Union, 2018), during the last few years Greece constantly presents one of the highest levels of anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe. The populace frequently expresses anxiety regarding the potentially negative impact

of immigration on employment rates, while immigrants themselves are often viewed as a threat to the Greek way of life (Triandafyllidou, 2000). As Chtouris and his collaborators (2014) point out, the percentage of Greek resistance towards immigration in the two Eurobarometer Surveys (1997, 2000) and the European Social Survey (ESS) of 2003 was striking. The severe economic crisis plaguing the country since 2008 has triggered social tensions between immigrants and natives. High unemployment rates and a general lack of resources have only served to increase the antagonism between the aforementioned groups (Triandafyllidou et al., 2014: 32) and have further revealed acute signs of intolerance towards immigrants (ibid: 27, 32; Baldwin-Edwards, 2014 :11). Accordingly, in the most recent Pew Research Centre survey (2014) concerning attitudes towards immigration, Greek natives yet again appear to endorse the most restrictive attitudes, compared to their Italian, French, Polish, German, Spanish and British counterparts, (86% of the Greeks advocating fewer immigrants entering the country), as well as the most negative views concerning immigrants' impact on their country. This negative stance towards immigration seems to still hold true (Triandafyllidou et al., 2014; European Union, 2018). In the most recent Eurobarometer study (European Union, 2018), 63% of the Greeks stated that immigration from non EU countries forms a problem rather than an opportunity for the country, scoring double above the European average. An analysis of the 2003 ESS data indicated that the main reason fuelling Greek anti-immigration attitudes is the perceived threat to native citizens' economic well-being, followed by the threat to national safety and culture (Sotiropoulou, 2014). The Pew Research Centre (2014) survey indicated that this trend remained largely unchanged. 70% of Greeks viewed immigrants as threat to employment and social benefits whereas 51% viewed them as a criminal threat (ibid: 28-29). The most recent Eurobarometer (European Union, 2018) shows that the pattern remains intact today, with financial concerns dominating and perceived security and cultural threat following. A publication by Dianeosis (2018), examining Greek public's perception of incoming immigration and national belonging, is even more revealing of the negativity prevalent among the Greek public in terms of the effect of diversity brought by immigration in the Greek society. More specifically, nearly 91% of the sample considers the number of migrants present in the country to be incredibly big, 72% believes that the migrant's presence triggers criminality, while 65% blames migrants for the rise of unemployment (ibid). Most importantly, 70% of the sample believes that migrants do not enrich the country's culture, with nearly 54% claiming that someone can only be born Greek and not become Greek, denoting a negative stance towards extending citizenship

access to non-nationals (ibid). Finally, 'being Greek' was attributed to following Greek customs and traditions (54%) and being born to Greek parents (43%), while speaking Greek (25%) and being a Christian Orthodox (24%) fell far behind. Thus, the most recent data available on public attitudes make clear that citizenship acquisition might provide second generation migrants with the legal definition of being Greek, but the public attitude still holds strong to 'Greekness' being defined by descent and ascribing to the 'Greek way of life'.

2.3.1.3. Immigrants, Refugees and National Belonging

As the above discussion highlighted, immigration and immigrants are perceived as a threat to Greece's national identity (Kakos & Palaiologou, 2014). As Macris (2012: 301) observes, immigration "weakens the (purported) self-contained territorial autonomy of the traditional nation-state, which has, in part, served as a rudimentary compass to orient people economically, politically, ethnically, and socially in a 'homogenous' society" (Macris, 2012: 301). Maronitis (2017: 28) further states that immigration in Greece has negative connotations, being linked with illegality and criminality, and is "(re)presented as uncontrolled". Media and press discourse in Greece further promote the representation of immigrants as inextricably tied to criminality and social tension (Triandafyllidou, Maroufof, & Nikolova, 2009; Pavlou, 2001). Batziou (2011) provides an extensive account of the Greek press's stereotypical and xenophobic photographic coverage of immigration. Triandafyllidou (2000) summarises that the discourse used to define the group boundaries between 'us' and 'them' has focused on the immigrants' non-Greek origins and their economically weak position, while attributing them characteristics, which link them to criminality and tension. In other words, immigrants are conceptualised as a cultural, economic and security threat.

Triandafyllidou and Veikou (2002) provide a very helpful explanation of conceptualisations of national belonging in Greece through their 'hierarchy of "Greekness"'. This hierarchy is in fact described in terms of concentric circles. 'Real Greeks' (i.e. Christian Orthodox, of Greek ethnicity, who are citizens of the Greek state) form the inner circle (ibid: 201). Then come the co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union and southern Albania, due to their Greek descent (ibid). However, a further distinction exists between these groups, based on their access to citizenship rights. Specifically, although Soviet Union co-ethnics were granted direct citizenship upon their arrival (ibid: 195) following a specifically targeted Ministerial Circular issued in 2000 (as cited by Christopoulos, 2013a: 8), citizenship rights to co-ethnics from Albania were only granted in 2006 (Triandafyllidou & Veikou, 2002: 195). This was because

despite their Greek descent, Southern Albanians were initially considered foreigners/citizens of another state, struggling with being generally represented as being the same with economic migrants from Albania (ibid). Non-Greeks legally residing in the country form the outer circle (ibid: 201), the 'other'. Finally, undocumented immigrants, deprived of any rights and perceived as a form of social pariah, were not included in the aforementioned hierarchy. This was probably because their presence was not noticeable enough at the beginning of the 2000s. However, after the 2015 so-called 'migration crisis', with the presence of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants across Greece being highly visible and constant, those groups' integration and conceptualisation has to be seriously considered (Skleparis, 2017a).

In general, between 1990s and 2000s, the Greek state's response to immigration was mainly reactive rather than proactive (Triandafyllidou, 2014) and the state was unable to come up with a systematic integration policy for the incoming migrant population (Baldwin-Edwards, 2002; Papadimitriou, Lempesi, & Spinthourakis, 2008). Like in the rest of the countries belonging to the so-called Mediterranean or Southern European model of migration (King, 2000; Pugliese, 2011), the main characteristics of immigration policies in Greece have been the conceptualisation of immigrants as temporary residents and their "contextualization as workers (for jobs the national population do not wish to do) and not as citizens with access to institutions and active participation in the social and political sphere" (Maronitis, 2017: 41). The policymakers' hesitation to address immigration as a long-term or permanent feature of the Greek society was initially interpreted as lack of experience (Maronitis, 2017). However, as time passed and the policies kept on being focused on short-term solutions (e.g. issuing of residency permits instead of citizenship provisions, securitization and deportation instead of integration), it became clear that the problem was the perceived threat posed by the migrants to the ethnic and cultural definition of the Greek national identity (ibid).

The distinction between nationals and non-nationals in Greece in terms of belonging is (re)produced through what Foucault (2004: 254) calls "state racism" and Tsagarousianou (1999: 177) calls "constitutional nationalism". These terms refer to the state's power to provide restricted access to rights and resources to non-nationals in an attempt to (re)produce the distinctive positionality of the nationals. An example of that is non-nationals lack of rights to political participation and representation (Christopoulos, 2013b). Another indicative example is Greek legislation on citizenship acquisition. As already mentioned, co-ethnics have had rights to citizenship acquisition upon their arrival for 10 years now, but immigrants

of non-Greek descent do not have this privilege (Papassiopi-Passia, 2004; Christopoulos, 2013a, 2013b). More specifically, it is only since July 2015 that the citizenship acquisition right has been granted to second generation migrants with the Law 4332/2105, with no provision for citizenship acquisition being currently in place for first generation immigrants. This law is undisputedly a step forward in Greece's diversity management policy. Breaking the *jus sanguinis* logic, it allows second generation migrants to acquire citizenship, provided they fulfil certain criteria linked to legal residency and completion of mandatory education in Greece. Specifically, the law offers citizenship rights to children of immigrants born in Greece, enrolled in and attending primary education, with at least one parent legally residing in Greece for the past 5 years. Residents falling into the aforementioned categories need to submit a declaration that they wish to acquire Greek citizenship to their 'region's competent service' charged with a fee of 100 euros (Christopoulos, 2015: 1). Citizenship is also provided to immigrant minors permanently and legally residing in Greece who have fulfilled either the whole mandatory 9-year (i.e. primary and secondary) education in Greece or just the 6 years of secondary education. Finally, legal immigrants, permanently residing in Greece, who have graduated from a Greek Higher Education Institution, may acquire citizenship within 3 years of their graduation, provided they attended and completed their whole secondary education in Greece. The role of education in acquiring citizenship should not be underrated, since, as explained at the beginning, education is instrumental to the (re)production of 'Greekness', a process that will be explained in more detail further down this chapter.

As Christopoulos (2015, 2017) explains, Law 4332/2015 marks the first attempt of Greek immigration policy to accommodate diversity within the rigid idea of national belonging. However, the state, shortly after the establishment of this law was called to deal with an unprecedented number of undocumented migrants, most of whom were asylum seekers, as mentioned before. Greece has been challenged to provide asylum seekers with adequate first reception conditions (including accommodation, health care provision, and schooling for children), to speed up relocation of these refugees to other EU countries and, finally, to process the claims of those that arrived after the EU-Turkey agreement (Triandafyllidou, 2017). However, suffering from the deep economic recession that started in 2008, the country has lacked in human and financial resources to meet the aforementioned challenges (ibid). Although monetary support from the EU has been granted and attempts have been made to

speed up the notoriously bureaucratic and time-consuming Greek asylum policies (Triandafyllidou et al., 2014), Greece is still struggling with refugees' integration (Howden, 2017; Triandafyllidou, 2017).

Despite the struggle, laws 4368/2016, 4375/2016 and 4415/2016 can be viewed as institutional initiatives bringing the integration of refugees in the Greek society to the forefront, although they exclude those refugees remaining on the islands (Skleparis, 2017a, 2017b). More specifically, the first law granted access to wage employment and self-employment for all those who have received or applied for asylum, provided that they have a valid residency permit. The second law provided free access to healthcare provisions in medical centres and hospitals as well as social security and welfare services and, finally, law 4415/2016 provided for the enrolment of refugee children to Greek public schools through after-school classes, separate from the regular school timetable.

To conclude, this chapter so far tried to present the multicultural nature of contemporary Greek society and the existing conceptualisations and representations around national belonging and diversity as well as around the relationship between the two. Although an official acknowledgment of the country's multicultural character has finally been established in paper by the new citizenship law and the laws providing refugees with access to employment, healthcare and education, in practice, immigrants and refugees remain "marginalised […], being kind of, but not really "citizens"" (Macris, 2012: 304). In general, the present mindset seems to denote that immigrant and refugees form the mainstream representation for the cultural diversity present in Greece. As a consequence, in the societal level, cultural diversity is excluded from the mainstream conceptualisations and representations of the national 'we', which is (re)produced based on ideas of cultural, linguistic and religious homogeneity. The remaining of this chapter is going to be focused on how cultural diversity is represented within the educational system.

2.3.2. Diversity in the Greek Educational System

The population change in the country's demographics brought by the immigration waves after the early 1990 is reflected to the Greek student population (Gkaintartzi, Kiliari & Tsokalidou, 2015; Spinthourakis, Lalor, & Berg, 2011). Multicultural classrooms are now the norm as opposed to the exception across Greece (Spinthourakis et al., 2010; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011), especially in the capital and the large urban centres (Palaiologou &

Evangelou, 2015). In Greece, a classroom with a multicultural synthesis is perceived as resulting from the co-presence of different ethno-cultural groups, such as migrants, Muslim minority and Roma students (PPMI, 2017: 33). Among the three categories, migrant students make up the biggest share. Historically, the highest number of culturally diverse students has been found in the primary school level (Palaiologou & Evangelou, 2015). Table 1 below presents the trends in the presence of immigrants, repatriated and Roma students in Greek primary schools from 2010-2015.

Table 1: Immigrant, Repatriated and Roma Students in Public Greek Primary Schools by Academic Year (2010-2015)

	Immigrant Students	Repatriated Students	Roma Students
2010-2011	95,128 (16%)	6,871 (1.1%)	12,562 (2.1%)
2011-2012	98,010 (16.6%)	6,548 (1.1%)	15,734 (2.6%)
2012-2013	87,465 (14.7%)	4,854 (0.8%)	15,802 (2.7%)
2013-2014	76,202 (12.9%)	3,581 (0.6%)	15,671 (2.6%)
2014-2015	74,834 (12.7%)	3,180 (0.5%)	15,911 (2.7%)

Source: Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (2015), Department of Studies, Education & Management in Primary Education (adopted by Palaiologou & Evangelou, 2015: 1)

Whereas the numbers of Roma students are increasing across the years (a factor which could be attributed to the targeted interventions that have been materialised through operational programs to facilitate Roma students school enrolment), a decrease in the absolute values of both immigrants and repatriated groups is noticed (Palaiologou & Evangelou, 2015). As far as the immigrant student population is concerned, its reduction might be due to return to their homelands as an outcome of the economic crisis (ibid). Baldwin-Edwards (2014) notes that Albanians fall into this category. As far as the repatriated students are concerned, there is surely a time effect in their reduction. "Children of co-ethnic families are coming of age and finishing school and there are no more co-ethnic families migrating to Greece" (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011: 403) probably due to the financial instability the country faces (Palaiologou & Evangelou, 2015).

However, the multicultural nature of the Greek student population remains significant. The presence of immigrant students keeps on being the most dominant and is now augmented by the recent migrant and refugee arrivals, with the European Commissioner of Human Rights talking about 20,000 school-aged kids currently permanently residing in the country (Council of Europe Commissioner of Human Rights, 2018). As a result, contemporary educational

policies (Pedagogical Institute, 2003; OECD, 2011; Education for All, 2015) focus on the need for promoting the integration of diversity in education and the development of multicultural awareness in Greece.

However, despite attempts to promote integration in Greek education, first- and second-generation immigrant students continue to underachieve (OECD, 2015), attend socioeconomically disadvantaged schools and are also more prone to drop out of school compared to their native peers (OECD, 2016b). Moreover, a large portion of refugee children residing in the country is still out of school (Greek Special Secretariat of Crisis Communicative Management, 2018), with those attending classrooms facing structural barriers (e.g. sole use of Greek as language of teaching instruction) (Palaiologou, 2012; Gkaintartzi et al. 2015, 2016), inappropriate educational material and inexperienced teaching staff (Anagnostou & Nikolova, 2017). The remaining sections of this chapter will try to illustrate how, despite the established multicultural student presence, the Greek educational system fails in promoting the integration of non-nationals and renewed multicultural conceptualizations of the national 'we', critically examining the main relevant initiatives adopted by the Greek state

2.3.2.1. Educational Curricula and Textbooks: Ethnocentrism or Multiculturalism?

Education can encourage inclusion, through a policy of belonging, via the official curriculum and legislation promoting diversity as a source of enrichment rather than a deficit (Reynolds, 2008). A telling example of that in Greece is Law 2910/2001, which made free public schooling accessible to every child residing in Greece, regardless of the legality of their residential status or citizenship, with education been compulsory for all individuals between the ages of 6 and 15. However, it also needs to be taken into consideration that a country's approach to its culturally diverse population, nationalism, citizenship and 'politics of belonging' will influence the manner in which schools approach diversity within the educational context, as well as how they teach children to become 'national', through formal and 'hidden' curricula (Mavroudi & Holt, 2015). Cursory examination would seem to indicate that this is the case in Greece. Gropas and Triandafyllidou (2011: 414) point out that, while multicultural educational policies in Greece may seem pluralistic "in the letter of law", in practice, the educational reality is more assimilatory, (re)producing the classic exclusionist understanding of national belonging instead of "the more general principles of respect for,

and recognition of, cultural diversity" (see Tarozzi, 2014 for the same argument regarding the Italian context).

This ethnocentric orientation seems to be related to the mono-ethnic conceptualization of national identity (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011). The Modern Greek educational system was constructed in 1928, as a means of promoting a sense of belonging to the then newly-established Greek state. This has been accomplished with the help of a centralised national curriculum, which is compulsory for all schools, and a centralised education management system, in which almost all decisions are made by the Ministry of Education (Chalari & Georgas, 2016; Paraskevopoulos & Morgan, 2011). Since then, ethnicity (defined as Greek descent, Orthodox religion and Greek language) has been promoted as the unifying force among Greek citizens (Kakos & Palaiologou, 2014; Pavlou, Mavrommati, & Theodoridis, 2005).

As Faas (2011a) mentions, Greece has been historically (re)producing this triad, amongst other ways, through its educational system, in order to protect the nation state from alien influences. Eschewing attempts to change it, education in Greece is still founded on the ahistorical concept that, throughout its history, the Greek nation has remained consistently culturally homogeneous (Kourti & Androussou, 2013: 201). Homogeneity is praised as a value, encouraging "xenophobia in the name of preservation of "authentic" national characteristics from "alien" influences" (ibid). Individuals who do not conform to this pure national standard are either ostracised from the mainstream educational context as deficient or treated through a "folkloric" approach (ibid). Greek policy initiatives only promote the retention of culturally diverse groups' linguistic and cultural heritage outside mainstream classrooms (Maniatis, 2012). Thus, Greek educational policies continue to be characterised by the logic of assimilation and homogeneity (Spinthourakis & Karakatsanis, 2011; see Tarozzi, 2014 on the same point for Italy), where valuing diversity translates into a tolerance of difference, as long as it does not threaten the national 'we' (Mavroudi & Holt, 2015). Cultural identities are viewed as static, unchanged entities and minority cultural identities are situated in opposition to the national identity, (re)producing 'otherness' (ibid). This means that the implicitly superior, dominant national identity accommodates and tolerates differences rather than genuinely incorporating them into the national 'we' (Joppke, 2004). Thus, although this approach seemingly promotes the importance of cultural diversity, it

really reinforces the ideals of ‘mono-cultural’ nationalism (Mavroudi & Holt, 2015) and ‘nationalist intolerance’ (Triandafyllidou & Kouki, 2013).

This is probably best illustrated by the country’s curricula and textbooks (Chalari & Georgas, 2016). In 2003, following relevant legislation concerning multicultural education and the right for equal access to education for all, a new national curriculum was released and new textbooks gradually replaced the old ones between 2006 and 2009 (Karanikola & Pitsou, 2015: 23-24). This educational material is used for teaching until today, although a new national curriculum and new textbooks have been announced (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2011), with some module-specific curricula been already introduced.

Under the general aims of education, the current Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework for Compulsory Education lists the provision of equal learning opportunities for all students and the enhancement of students’ cultural and linguistic identity, within a multicultural society (Pedagogical Institute, 2003). However, in the same document, it is also mentioned that there is a need for “the preservation of our national identity and cultural awareness” (ibid: 5). Thus, although efforts were made to infuse the new curriculum with concepts related to the acknowledgment of and respect for diversity (Alachiotis & Karatzia-Stavlioti, 2006), “there remain strong influences focused on the needs of a monocultural learning environment” (Spinthourakis & Karakatsanis, 2011: 49; see also Maniatis, 2012; Kakos & Palaiologou, 2014). A recent analysis of the resultant new curricula, across all educational levels, reveals that their references to multicultural education are marginal (Katsarou & Tsafos, 2010). Zachos (2013) posits that the Greek educational system persists in instilling its students with the idea that modern Greeks, as the descendants of the ancient Greeks who enlightened the world with their grand civilization, should be the recipients of special praise and preferential treatment. As Traianou (2009) puts it, Greeks tend to focus on how they have influenced others by drawing on the ‘ancient glorious past’, instead of examining to what extent and by whom they have been influenced across time (Broome, 1996). Mentions to the achievements of ‘others’ are made, but only in such a context that assists the grand national narrative (Zachos, 2013). Textbooks, he claims, more or less continue narrating the 3000-year old, everlasting presence of the homogeneous Greek nation’s brilliance (ibid).

Many academic papers have explained how Greek History teaching has contributed to the shaping of a narrow concept of national belonging (e.g. Zervas, 2012; Chalari & Georgas,

2016). After analysing History curricula, Faas (2011a, 2011b) found that nearly 2/3 of the total units had a national focus. The History module has a particularly high status in Greece, insofar it is the only Social Science module taught throughout the 9 years of compulsory education (Faas, 2011a: 172). As mentioned in the first part of this chapter (Sections 2.3.1.), History plays a big role in (re)producing the 'otherness' of Muslim identity through the entities dealing with Ottoman occupation and the Greco-Turkish wars between 1453-1821 (Chrysoloras, 2004). The fact that the "main purpose of the reformed history curriculum still lies in the development of national consciousness and citizenship, with Europe and multiculturalism being only marginally addressed" (Faas, 2011b: 481) is of great concern, when examining the causes guiding the cultivation of exclusionary ideas towards the 'other' through a heightened pride in the national 'we'. This is because a History curriculum focusing on ethnocentrism presents "a skewed view of history" (Doharty, 2015, as cited by Bhopal, 2018: 77) and "influences the type of knowledge that is considered legitimate", (Bhopal, 2018: 77) giving a precedence to the majority culture in dispense of multicultural perspectives.

Geography and citizenship curricula and textbooks do not significantly deviate from the aforementioned paradigm, although in these modules a better balance between national and European topics is generally achieved (Faas, 2011a, 2011b). In Geography, countries and cultures outside Europe or the EU basically remain unexplored; no mention is made of diversity issues related to migration and thus the intercultural dimension is ignored (Faas, 2011a). So, the emphasis placed on Europe cultivates a 'Eurocentrism', which acts as an extension of the prevailing ethnocentrism (ibid; Faas, 2011b). This is also very much the case with the various citizenship education curricula, which veers back and forth between Europeanism and ethnocentrism (ibid). Another relevant study, analysing the citizenship education textbook used in Year 5 of primary school, revealed a basic lack of elements of respect for diversity, including the need for its promotion within a democratic framework for the development of a harmonious society (Palaiologou, Georgiadis, Evangelou, & Zisimos, 2012).

Last but not least, the Religious Education (RE) curricula have also been (re)producing an exclusionary 'Greekness', highlighting the centrality of Christian Orthodox religion for the Greek society, while omitting the study of other religions (Efstathiou et al., 2008). As mentioned in article 16 of the Greek constitution (Greek Parliament, 2013), public education

has the aim of promoting the students' religious consciousness, in a country where Christian Orthodoxy is recognised as the prevailing religion (article 3 of the constitution). Therefore, the constitution is often interpreted as obliging the state to provide RE in the form of teaching the Christian Orthodox dogma (Koukounaras Liagkis, 2015; Fokas & Markoviti, 2017). This is indeed what has actually happened in practice in RE so far, with Orthodoxy having a central role and only marginal references made to other Christian traditions, world religions and worldviews (ibid). The dominance of Orthodoxy and the absence of religious diversity play out both in formal and informal curricula. In terms of informal curricula, an obligatory Orthodox morning prayer takes place every morning in all schools across the country and the school calendar is based around the Christian Orthodox calendar, celebrating only relevant religious events (Tsioumis, Kyridis, & Lytsiousi, 2014). In terms of formal curricula, not only have references to other religions being marginal but also practically no alternatives have been provided for non-Orthodox students. More specifically, although in 2008 two circular addresses provided the right to non-Christian students to be exempted from attending RE through the submission of a written claim to their school of attendance, the only alternative provided to them was to attend modules offered concurrently in another class of their cohort (Circular addresses of the Directorate of Studies of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs 104071/Γ2-4/09/2008 and Φ.12/977/109744/Γ1). In cases where only one class exists, students exempted from RE are obliged to attend a course focusing on Greek language teaching, designed by the school's teaching body (ibid). As Tsimouris (2008) puts it, so far, non-Orthodox students have had no alternative but to abstain from the morning prayer and the RE course, to be invisible in the school space. So, the disproportionate emphasis on the study of Christian Orthodoxy coupled by the strict rules on exemption from the class of RE and the teaching of the subject exclusively by graduates of the Orthodox Faculties of Theology, all render RE in the Greek context far from objective, critical and pluralistic (Fokas & Markoviti, 2017). All in all, RE curricula have been (re)producing a strong link between Greek citizenship and Orthodoxy and the assumption that being Greek is equated to being Christian Orthodox (Efstathiou et al., 2008; Molokotos-Liederman, 2003).

Taking all the notes regarding the content of Greek educational curricula and textbooks made above into consideration, it becomes clear that even though attempts have been made to adjust them to the current Greek multicultural reality, these have mostly followed an 'add-on' approach, thus not challenging the prevalence of monocultural understandings of belonging.

As Chalari & Georgas (2016: 38-39) put it, Greek curricula and textbooks "are still conservative and oblivious towards matters concerning religion" or other cultures, "particularly those traditionally seen as 'enemies'" and are still highly reluctant to promote genuine understandings of Greece as a multicultural society. The new RE curricula initiated as part of the 'New School' initiative, aiming to harmonise the educational material with the contemporary Greek multicultural reality (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2011), form the first step towards progress on the issue of inclusive RE. Specifically, the new curricula aimed at moving RE away from a theological approach (i.e. related to a particular religion and faith) to a religious studies one (i.e. related to different religions, cultures and traditions) (Koukounaras Liagkis, 2015). Therefore, the study of religious denominations relevant to the Greek society formed one of the 3 basic axes of the new curriculum (Ministerial Decree 101470/Δ2). Despite the changes initiated, the content of the module remains basically Christian and the step forward to religious studies is slight, with the study of world religions being estimated at only 10% of the whole RE curriculum (ibid). It is worth mentioning that the new RE curricula were faced with extreme reactions initiated by the Church, since the Church of Greece has the right to intervene in state education matters related to RE (ibid). As a result, several Church representatives brought the new curricula to court, in order to be judged by the Greek Council's Fourth Chamber. Strikingly, the Court decided that the new curricula are indeed unconstitutional in March 2018 (Moustaka, 2018). As becomes clear, despite any initiatives taken to incorporate religious diversity in RE in Greece, Orthodoxy keeps on playing an integral part of Greek educational curricula, always primed in dispense of other religions as a characteristic of the Greek national identity.

As this section attempted to show, despite the presence of a multicultural student population in Greek educational classrooms, the educational materials currently present are not multiculturally relevant and keep on facilitating exclusionary understandings of belonging, (re)producing understanding of Greek society and culture as homogeneous. However, the multicultural character of contemporary Greek society is an established reality and, as the recent attempts to change the content of Greek educational curricula towards more inclusive approaches have not brought meaningful changes, the importance to equip future teachers with multicultural competence to 'make space' for diversity, challenge hegemonic narratives and understanding and promote multicultural understandings towards social justice is highlighted.

2.3.2.2. Diversity Management Initiatives in Greek Educational Policy

Apart from the aforementioned recent attempt to integrate multicultural elements in the national educational curricula through a revised RE curriculum, some other initiatives facilitating diversity integration have previously been made. The content of these interventions is important as it provides insights regarding the approach that the Greek state has been taken in order to respond to its multicultural reality.

As previously mentioned, before the 1980s the country was mainly conceptualised as homogenous. Consequently, up until then, multicultural education initiatives focused on the education of the Greek diaspora (Maniatis, 2012). Although the first Soviet Union Greeks had begun repatriating, targeted educational policies for repatriated students were limited to preferential treatment. The political measures taken were provisional, with a charitable character, limited to the lenient treatment of repatriated students, consisting of lower grade requirements for their school entry, placement and assessment examinations (Spinthourakis & Karakatsanis, 2011).

During the 1980s, repatriated Greeks, primarily from the former Soviet Union and Southern Albania (but also from Germany and the United States), started to become a noticeable presence in the Greek educational system, resulting in the Greek state's interest shifting to that group. The unifying characteristic between students falling into this group was that, despite their Greek descent, they were not native speakers of the Greek language (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011). The underlying logic of policy initiatives adopted to facilitate the repatriated students' integration seems to have perceived repatriated students as deficient, due to their diverse background, consequently prescribing remedial strategies to 'align' them with the Greek 'norm' (Damanakis, 1997). Students' prior experiences were deemed irrelevant and of no use under the new educational context; assimilation to the Greek norm was the special educational provisions' sole purpose particularly through Greek language teaching (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011). In other words, the educational system incorporated repatriated students without making any substantive accommodative changes for their integration. On the contrary, it was the students' responsibility to adapt to the new country's terms to avoid exclusion from the educational system (Maniatis, 2012). The fact that the vast majority of the co-ethnic returnees were willing to disregard their linguistic and cultural particularities in order to become part of the new society (Motti-Stefanidi, Pavlopoulos, Obradović, & Masten, 2008 for Former Soviet Union co-ethnics) further legitimised this

dominant assimilationist approach (Markou, 1993). So, the Greek government addressed the challenge of the repatriated students' integration through the establishment of the first tutorial and reception classes (Ministerial Decree Φ.818/2/Z/21/3175/7-9-82 and Law 1404/83, Art. 45).

With the large immigration waves that arrived in the country during the early 1990s, the student population in Greece became more multicultural so that repatriated students no more comprised the only noticeable culturally diverse group. For this reason, Law 2413/1996 was established, officially acknowledging the multicultural reality of the Greek educational system for the first time. Until the present day, the law forms the backbone of the Greek multicultural educational policy (Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2011), as the first institutional measure taken in this direction (ibid). Under the influence of European discourse emphasizing the need to bring diverse cultures in contact and dialogue (Barzanò, Cortiana, Jamison, Lissoni, & Raffio, 2017), multicultural education[3] was identified as the diversity management approach to be adapted for culturally diverse students' integration. However, despite the multicultural nature of the law on paper, the facilitation of multicultural education in practice has been based on 'separation' (Damanakis, 1997) instead of the promotion of meaningful intergroup contact and dialogue across the student body. In other words, despite the official acknowledgement of the multicultural nature of the Greek student population since 1996, the educational practices adopted so far to address the needs of students with a culturally diverse background have been based on exclusionary practices. In the remaining part of this section, the three most popular educational provisions for culturally diverse students will be presented, in an attempt to highlight how they (re)produce students with a culturally diverse background as 'minorities, margins and misfits' and their education as excluded from the educational 'mainstream' (Currie, 2006).

2.3.2.2.1. Tutorial and Reception Classes

As mentioned above, tutorial and reception classes were first adapted as a response to addressing the needs of the repatriated students that arrived in the country between the 1980s and early 1990s. Tutorial classes were first established in lower and upper secondary schools

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[3] Although the Greek term used to refer to multicultural education provisions translates to 'intercultural education', the term 'multicultural education' will be used throughout to refer to the relevant provisions for the purpose of coherence with the present study's perspective.

(Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011). They took place after the end of the school day and were designed to provide extra support to repatriated students (Ministerial Decision Φ.818/2/Z/21/3175/7-9-82). Reception classes attempted to immediately adjust these students to the Greek educational reality, neglecting the cultural capital they carried into the school (Nikolaou, 2000). More specifically, in these classes, teaching of the students' native language did not occur, despite the fact that the legislation left that possibility open (Maniatis, 2012). Reception classes focused primarily on Greek language, culture and history teaching, especially after the revised version of Law 1404/83 (Law 1894/1990) came into effect (Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011). It seems that the aim of both tutorial and reception support classes was the linguistic and cultural assimilation of repatriated students (Skourtou, Vratsalis, & Govaris, 2004).

Even though the provisions of reception and tutorial classes were revised through a ministerial decision in 1999, to cover the needs of the newly arrived immigrant students, their underlying, assimilative principle did not change. Ministerial Decision Φ10/20/Γ1/708 (1999) gave two separate forms to reception classes. The first ran in parallel to normal teaching hours and separated students in need from the rest of the class, mostly in order to assist non-Greek students in Greek language learning. The students attending these classes only joined the regular class to which they belonged according to their age group for Physical Education, Music and foreign languages courses. Attendance of this sort of reception classes could last for up to two years, following which students were returned to the mainstream classroom. The second type of reception classes took the form of individualised teaching assistantship. In these situations, an assistant teacher was allocated to provide in-classroom support to the student that faced difficulties with the Greek language. As far as tutorial classes were concerned, these were offered to students for as long as they needed extra support with their course work for reasons primarily relating to poor levels of Greek language competence. The ministerial decision also gave employment opportunities to foreign teachers (primarily those hailing from the immigrant students' countries of origin) as teaching personnel for both the reception and tutorial classes. Finally, it tried to decentralise the organization of native language courses, by making the regional offices for education provisions responsible for the aforementioned actions instead of the Ministry. However, the funding source for these initiatives was undefined, which probably contributed to regional offices never actually organizing the said classes (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011).

Tutorial classes have steadily disappeared from the vocabulary of educational provisions for culturally diverse students, but reception classes are retained. The latter are always connected to the education of non-Greek students and mainly used to assist in intensive Greek language learning (Mitakidou & Daniilidou, 2007; Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003). The most recent example showing the preservation of the concept is its initiation as the most relevant provision for the educational integration of refugee students in the Greek educational system. Law 4415/2016 provided for the establishment of reception classes for refugee children within the premises of Greek public schools. The term used to describe these classes was 'reception structures for the educational needs of refugees'. However, once again, the classes organised were to operate separately from the regular school classrooms, taking place after the end of the school timetable, running daily between 14:00-18:00 and including the teaching of Greek, English, Math, IT, Arts and Physical Education. According to data available, between October 2016 and April 2017, 111 reception structures operated across the country, which covered 37 refugee reception centres, excluding though the refugee students residing in the islands (Anagnostou & Nikolova, 2017: 7). Although this was an initiative targeted towards the integration of refugee students, the background logic of separation from the normal school timetable denotes an exclusionary tendency. As a member of the committee that was put in charge of the solution for the refugee's educational provisions by the Greek Ministry of Education put it, this idea of after-school classes "was [a] ghetto that could be made to look like integration" (Howden, 2017, n.p.).

Despite the good intentions reflected in reception classes' planning, reality has been different. In their most recent use for refugee integration, reception classes fell short in the implementation of a lot of the provisions envisaged on paper. Specifically, student enrolment was only around 30% of the total, stemming from, amongst others, no provisions for parental involvement, inadequate student recruitment and awareness raising (Anganostou & Nikolova, 2017). Moreover, there was a lack of relevant educational material, as the ones in place were produced to address the needs of a student population with entirely different cultural backgrounds (i.e. repatriated Greeks from the Soviet Union and immigrants form Balkan countries) (ibid). Finally, a big problem was the lack of relevant training to address culturally diverse students among the educators employed to teach in reception classes (ibid). With educators being selected from the large national pool of substitute teachers, no knowledge on teaching non-native students or relevant previous work experience were set as prerequisites

for the educators' employment. Moreover, no systematic training was provided to the teaching force employed to meet the needs of refugee students. As a result, there was a significantly high drop-out rate of educators, as they were lacking in knowledge, attitudes and skills to teach Greek as a foreign language and/or address kids coming from a different culturally diverse background (ibid). All in all, reception classes have been generally criticised as assimilatory in nature and as failing their cause of integration. Their operation rather promotes separation between 'us' and 'them' as students enrolled in reception classes have been mentioned as ending up caught in this streaming system (Howden, 2017), never getting fully included in the classroom they should attend based on their age. Based on all this, recent suggestions highlight the need for Greece to integrate migrant language-learners into the regular school classrooms that correspond to their year group as soon as possible instead of educating them separately (Anagnostou & Nikolova, 2017; OECD, 2016b).

2.3.2.2.2. Intercultural Schools and the Institute for the Education of Co-ethnic Returnees and for Intercultural Education

Intercultural schools and the Institute for the Education of Co-Ethnic Returnees and for Intercultural Education (*Institouto Paedias Omogenon kai Diapolitismikis Ekpaidefsis*, IPODE) were introduced as part of the Law 2413/1996. More specifically, the law established 26 intercultural schools across Greece, for the education of 'students with special educational, social and cultural needs' (Part 10, Art. 34). Between them, thirteen are primary schools, nine are lower secondary and four are upper secondary schools. For a school to be classed as intercultural, at least 45% of its student population must be non-native, although, conversely, not all schools meeting this requirement are classed as such (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011). These schools follow the national curriculum but, in contrast to mainstream schools, they are not obliged to cover the entire syllabus (ibid). The law provides them with a certain degree of autonomy in order to effectively respond to the specific needs of their foreign student population (ibid). They can provide courses related to the students' native language and culture for up to four hours per week. They may also promote the involvement of foreign students' parents in school life and can receive state funding to organise special festivities on issues related to diversity issues and the promotion of intergroup contact (ibid). Finally, the teaching force of intercultural schools is supposed to hold relevant credentials, so that learning can be adjusted to students' needs (ibid).

The law also established a semi-autonomous institute within the Greek Ministry of Education, in order to specifically deal with issues of Intercultural Education: The Institute for the Education of Co-ethnic Returnees and for Intercultural Education (IPODE) (Part 2, Art.5). Specifically, IPODE, in collaboration with the Pedagogical Institute, was responsible for publishing textbooks and other teaching resources for use in both Intercultural Schools, and Reception and Support classes (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011). However, both the tasks and the resources assigned to IPODE were more closely tailored to the education of Greeks in diaspora than to the needs of immigrant students in Greece (ibid).

Law 2413/1996 acknowledged the Greek student population's multicultural nature and the need to address its integration to the Greek education. However, neither intercultural schools nor IPODE operated in the manner they were supposed to. According to Mitakidou, Tressou and Daniilidou (2009), intercultural schools have not "added alternative lessons to cater for the specific educational, social, cultural or instructional needs of the students" (as cited by Macris, 2012: 300). It has been proposed that, in everyday practice, the educational provisions in intercultural schools follow a charitable logic, according to which the special educational needs of the students are dealt with by lowering assessment standards (ibid). Students attending reception classes, for example, are often promoted from one year-group to the other without any real assessment, thus constituting them unable to identify such educational gains as they may have gained from said classes (ibid). Alternatively, one could take the position that, by largely translating the curricular autonomy provided by Law 2413/96 into greater emphasis on Greek language teaching (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011), intercultural schools broadly neglect the culture their students bring into the classroom. This came into the surface from Tsaliki's (2012) research findings from all Greek intercultural primary schools, according to which members of staff stated that neither Greek as an additional language is systematically taught in the intercultural primary schools, nor is the foreign students' first language included in the curriculum and taught by native teachers. This practice of excluding students' mother tongue from the curriculum and the recruitment of minority teachers is adopted, despite the fact that findings have shown that when minority teachers were involved in teaching in intercultural schools, students' progress was enhanced due to "the parallel teaching and use of their first language and their culture", but also because the possibilities of teachers' stereotypical attitudes towards the educational potentials of culturally diverse students were decreased (ibid: 75) (see also Freytag, 2016 for minority

educators' role in minority student achievement in HE settings). Moreover, the same research showed that, although teaching staff was supposed to have appropriate qualifications in order to be employed in intercultural schools by the law, this has not been consistently implemented, especially as the law never clearly outlined what those credentials should look like (Tsaliki, 2012). The 2004 ministerial decision 114163/Δ2/2004 clarified that teachers asking to get transferred to intercultural schools needed to have sufficient knowledge of the foreign students' majority mother tongue and additional qualifications, such as training on issues related to the teaching of Greek as an additional language, postgraduate studies in education in general or in intercultural education in specific, participation in intercultural education conferences or seminars or previous working experience in reception/tutorial classes. However, Tsaliki (2012) highlighted how almost 70% of the teaching personnel of these schools had no further qualifications and how they reported being inadequately prepared to implement multicultural education and effectively respond to their students' needs. Finally, intercultural schools have ended up being attended almost exclusively by non-Greek students (Nikolaou, 2000; Tsaliki, 2012). This is because native students' parents have been found to be negative to enrolling their children in designated intercultural schools (Tsaliki, 2012) or even moving their kids out of these schools (Nikolaou, 2000), due to the fact that they accommodate a large number of foreign or repatriated children (Nikolaou, 2000; Tsaliki, 2012). Therefore, intercultural schools are in reality minority schools, which have been transformed into a sort of ghetto (ibid).

The establishment of these schools and their ghettoization coupled by the establishment of the distinct body of IPODE, which was supposed to specifically cater for issues related to multicultural education have been claimed to indicate that multicultural education is not relevant to all students in Greece; rather, it is only for those with "educational, social, cultural and learning specificities" as the law defines them (Maniatis, 2012: 163). In other words, multicultural education has mainly been treated as solely relevant to intercultural schools, which at present comprise a mere 0.2% of the total number of school units operating across the country (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011: 407-408; Palaiologou & Faas, 2012).

At this point, it is worth mentioning that, except from the intercultural primary schools in Greece, there are also 18 more primary schools, categorised as 'foreign' (Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, 2018), which in substance means 'intercultural' (Eurydice, 2018). Among those, there are foreign schools following a foreign curriculum,

such as the Philippine School in Greece, foreign schools with a Greek curriculum, such as the Greek-French School 'Ioanna D' Arc', and schools combining a Greek and a foreign curriculum, such as the German School of Athens (ibid; Tsaliki, 2012). However, these schools form a different tier of the Greek educational system, are private and predominantly located within Athens (Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, 2018). According to Eurydice (2018), the first category of international schools mainly addresses foreign nationals living in Greece, whereas the other two place emphasis on foreign language teaching and cultural elements and are thus mainly attracting upper(-middle) class parents, who view them as a way to educate their children so that they can become cosmopolitan citizens, having employability skills that can be recognised across the borders. It can thus be inferred that they play only a minimal role in the integration of immigrant or refugee students within the Greek educational system, as the discourse surrounding them is oriented towards cosmopolitanism rather than multiculturalism.

As far as culturally diverse students attending mainstream schools are concerned, their educational needs have kept on being addressed through the teaching of Greek as a second language in reception or support classes (Mitakidou & Daniilidou, 2007; Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003). Although the Ministerial Decision Φ2/378/Γ1/1124/1994 and the law 2413/1996 provided for the employment of native teachers for the teaching of students' mother tongue and culture as well as the use of bilingual books, these provisions seem to have never been put into effect (Kiliari, 2005; Tsaliki, 2012). Only stand-alone cases are reported in the literature, in which classes on the students' native language were organised and those originated from headteachers' initiatives, realising the beneficial role of mother tongue teaching for students' identity development and Greek language learning, despite the lack of approval gained by the relevant local educational authorities (e.g. Boubouka, 2010; Spinthourakis & Karakatsanis, 2011). The lack of space for students' home languages in curricula has been identified as a structural issue that needs to be dealt with (Basu, 2011; Liddicoat & Curnow, 2014) and, based on the premise that Greek educational system valorises Greek only, it has been criticised for its ethnocentric, monolingual orientation which shows neglect for students' linguistic and cultural diversity (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015, 2016).

2.3.2.2.3. Action Programs for the Education of Culturally Diverse Students

Parallel to the 1996 legislation, 3 large-scale programs, dealing with the education of culturally diverse students in Greece were launched, each targeting the educational needs of a

specific minority population. One catered for the Thracian Muslim minority, another for the Roma population and one for immigrants and repatriated students. These programs were initially presented during the 1994-1999 period under the Operational Program 'Education and Initial Vocational Training' (EPEAEK I), aiming, amongst other things, at the elimination of discrimination within the Greek educational system by providing equal access to all students (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 1994). This operational program was highly influenced by EU guidelines (e.g. European Commission, 1995) promoting the need for social inclusion and education for all as the key for the development of a successful, competitive economy (Pasias & Roussakis, 2002). Thus, the program was co-funded by the Greek state and the EU. Major Greek universities assisted in carrying the educational programs for the minority populations out.

Following the successful initial implementation of the educational programs specifically catering to the needs of minority populations in Greece (i.e. Thracian Muslims, Roma, immigrants and repatriated students), the programs' funding was renewed for another 5-year period (2001-2006). The rationale behind this decision had once again a strong European influence (Pasias & Rousakis, 2002), the European Council's Lisbon agreement, which included measures that would make the Union the most competitive economy worldwide by 2010 (European Parliament, 2000). This time, the operational program aimed at the integration of children with cultural and linguistic particularities in the educational system through the promotion of equal chances for the whole student population and the reduction of school drop-out rates through supporting all young people in order to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that will increase their chances of integrating in the labour market (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and Special Authority of EPEAEK management, 2007). Its initiatives included in-service training for educators teaching in classes with a high concentration of diverse students, the utilization of Reception and Tutorial classes, the provision of support for minority students and their families, the design of supporting educational material and the creation of a network between schools participating in the program (ibid). Although this program had to provide support material for the teaching of diverse student populations, their "production, printing and dissemination" (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011: 408) has been discontinued since 2006, due to initial funding running out and no renewed funding being awarded from the Ministry of Education. It is worth mentioning that EPEAEK was the main way in which multicultural education initiatives

became relevant to mainstream schools apart from intercultural ones. More specifically, public schools across the country had the chance to participate in the program by responding to an open call of expression of interest for participating in actions related to diversity management (ibid). Of course, a draw occurred after the closure of the call of expression of interest, as it was impossible for the program authorities, in terms of human and financial resources, to cater for the total number of schools that expressed an interest.

The programs targeting the education of Muslim, Roma, immigrant and repatriated students got further extended for the period 2007-2013. This time they formed part of the bigger operational program 'Education and Life-Long Learning', which was co-funded by the European Union. The implementation of multicultural education provisions in the wider educational context were on paper one of the goals of the project, framed as "the upgrade of the quality of education and the promotion of social inclusion" (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2007: 123). Once again though, looking at the specific actions envisaged to attain the aforementioned goal, it becomes clear that multicultural education is understood as something related solely to "social groups with cultural and linguistic particularities" (ibid) and not the rest of the student population.

The same trend of targeted interventions for culturally diverse students is retained in the most recent operational program currently in place, entitled 'Development of Human Resources, Education and Life-long Learning' (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2016). The European influence is once again prevalent, with the specific actions of the program being aligned to the European framework 'Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', stressing the need for the development of competitive economies, primarily through assessment and connection of education and labour market (European Commission, 2010). The main target in terms of culturally diverse student populations in Greece is providing them with equal access to quality education and decreasing their school drop-out rates (European Commission, 2014). The promotion of multicultural education initiatives is mentioned but understood mainly as providing intensive Greek language courses to culturally diverse student populations, who are referred to as "socially vulnerable" (ibid: 232).

To sum up, the development of these action programs targeting the educational needs of culturally diverse students in Greece and providing for the implementation of multicultural

education initiatives in mainstream Greek schools have been mentioned as a good practice (Anagnostou & Nikolova, 2017; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011). However, these special programs cannot be conceived as permanent solutions and their practices have not to date been translated into relevant policy measures (ibid). In other words, apart from targeting specifically the culturally diverse students, no systematic attempt has been made to facilitate culturally diverse students' learning in the mainstream classroom setting through the creation of meaningful multicultural learning environments that could promote a shift in the majority student population's perception of contemporary Greek reality as diverse and multicultural in nature (ibid; Mitakidou & Daniilidou, 2007; Mitakidou et al., 2009). In such classroom environments, all students would work and learn together, with teachers implementing differentiated teaching instruction practices to set and achieve high goals in an equitable way for each student (Liang & Zhang, 2009). Diversity would be treated as a source of enrichment instead of a hindrance to learning, with cultural elements like religion and previous life experiences of diverse students being incorporated in the teaching materials to make learning relevant to culturally diverse students, but also to educate the majority students about the cultures of their classmates and make everyone understand that the contemporary Greek classroom as well as societal reality is multicultural. Teachers in such classrooms will also 'act upon' existing inequities, such as the underrepresentation of diverse cultures from the curricula, and engage students in discussions about how privilege shapes majority-minority relations as well as how social justice requires active participation and structural change to ensure equal power standing and opportunities for all. Once again, this lack in systematic education initiatives promoting multicultural learning and understandings of belonging across all mainstream educational settings as delineated above highlights the need to train multiculturally competent future teachers that can act as "agents of reform" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018: 572) initiating relevant meaningful changes (ibid; Pantić & Florian, 2015).

2.3.2.3. The Role of Initial Teacher Training

Based on the multicultural reality of the school classrooms in Greece and in an attempt to follow the relevant educational initiatives initiated by the EU (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013; PPMI, 2017), the need for training educators who are able to efficiently and effectively address the diversity presence has become apparent (Palaiologou, 2004; Paleologou & Evangelou, 2003, 2007; Sakka, 2010). Greek academics specialising in teacher training often refer to the urgent need for multicultural competence

among Greek pre-service teachers (e.g. Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013; Nikolaou, 2011). Although studies have highlighted the need for initial teacher training curricula to put more emphasis on managing student diversity in practice (Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013), to date, there is a lack of systematic changes in teacher training programs (Tsaliki, 2012). Even from a non-systematic perspective, very little action has been taken regarding teacher training in Greece on the issue of cultural diversity in the classroom (Sakka, 2010; Maniatis, 2012). Its orientation remains highly nationalistic and monocultural, designed to prepare teachers to teach "Greek children born in Greece [to] Greek parents residing in Greece" (Stamelos, 2001: 84). The sole policy measure implemented to further the adoption of an intercultural perspective is the inclusion of diversity-related modules in initial teacher training programs, with modules specifically catered to the subject being gradually incorporated after the early 2000s (Karatzia-Stavlioti, Spinthourakis, & Zografou, 2005). However, most of these remain optional and vary largely between different institutions in both content and delivery methods (Liakopoulou, 2006; Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013; Spinthourakis, 2010).

This variance in terms of diversity-related modules offered across the various departments of education stems from the independence that each department has in designing its program of studies. Going a step back, the common ground for Initial Teacher Training provision in Greece is that students wanting to become primary school teachers have only one way to do so and this is to graduate from a Department of Primary Education, which is part of a public Higher Education institution. There are nine such departments across Greece. To enter these departments, students have to sit national exams at the end of High School (17-18 years old) and achieve a GPA that will match the threshold entrance grade defined by each department.[4] The program of studies is completed over four years and, within this time, students have to complete courses that correspond to 240 ECTS. Courses are either mandatory or optional and, most of the times, they can be broadly divided into three axes: a) educational sciences (i.e. pedagogy, teaching methodology, multicultural education etc.), b) teaching in specific subject-areas (i.e. physics, mathematics etc.) and c) teaching practice (Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013). However, based on these common principles, each Department of Education separately designs and develops its own curriculum in terms of individual courses

[4] For students that already hold a HE degree and wish to enrol in a department of Primary Education, there are separate qualifying exams set by each department every year.

offered (ibid). Thus, the number and status of diversity-related modules offered in each department varies substantially and to an extent, this implies the significance each department gives to preparing its students towards a multicultural education orientation (ibid). In general, it appears that these modules are often marginalised within teacher training curricula (Kourti & Androussou, 2013) and, in many departments, future educators can still complete their university degrees without having received any specific training on multicultural education (Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013; Kourti & Androussou, 2013).

Indeed, the majority of in-service teachers claim they are inadequately prepared to meet the needs of a multicultural classroom (Paleologou & Evangelou, 2007; Spinthourakis & Katsillis, 2003) and this holds true for the staff of intercultural schools too (Spyridakis, 2002; Tsaliki, 2012). In general, Greek in-service teachers are found to lack both in multicultural knowledge and skills, which makes them unable to successfully incorporate multicultural elements in their everyday teaching practice (Dimitriadou & Efstathiou, 2008, 2012). Moreover, studies in Greece show that both in-service (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015; Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011) and pre-service teachers (Tsigilis, Tsioumis, & Gregoriadis, 2006; Spinthourakis et al., 2009) hold biased, stereotypical attitudes towards multicultural education and culturally diverse students, which stem from 'diversity as a deficit' discourse (Magos & Simopoulos, 2009). The fact that pre-service teachers have been exposed to an ethnocentric logic, which does not valorise cultural diversity, throughout their lives, both in the educational and wider social context, may provide a possible explanation for their adoption of stereotypical lenses for issues related to diversity (Kourti & Androussou, 2013). Spinthourakis et al. (2009) suggest that stereotypical understandings regarding multicultural education vary among pre-service teachers and depend on their training and experiences with minorities.

An alternative explanation may present itself in the contradiction between theory and practice, faced by pre-service teachers who have attended multicultural education modules, concerning the significance of diversity related issues. More specifically, during their training, emphasis is placed on the need to recognise, respect and effectively address diversity in the classroom. During their practicum placements, however, some pre-service teachers have been found to experience a limited applicability of these tenets in everyday practice and express varying degrees of doubt about the usefulness of their course-acquired knowledge (Kourti & Androussou, 2013). In such cases, the message received from their

teaching practicum is that the role of the educator is strictly restricted to implementing the national curriculum, rather than "developing a critical stance towards the system itself as well as the current practices adopted by the formal school system" (ibid: 203). As a result, following their practicum training, many pre-service teachers deem knowledge on diversity and multiculturalism irrelevant, in light of the persistently ethnocentric core elements of contemporary national curricula.

Overall, the analysis of the Greek educational context seems to suggest that the accommodation of cultural diversity follows a somewhat segregationist logic. The picture drawn depicts two distinct communities, a national 'we' and the alien 'others'. The policies followed so far seem designed, to a certain extent, to facilitate communication between and co-existence of these communities, though without any "negotiation of the nature and identity of the host community" (Kakos & Palaiologou, 2014: 81). Thus, a reproduction of the distinction between 'us' and them' is promoted, "which is counterproductive to any effort for the attainment of social cohesion" (ibid).

Both in the wider societal and educational context, the burden for tackling exclusion seems to be placed solely on the shoulders of minority populations, leaving the majority population intact (ibid: 79). Minorities must overcome their 'deficits', which allegedly stem from their diverse cultural background, and conform to the pre-defined norms of the national majority. However, rather than resulting from their background, the minority populations' vulnerable position seems to be a consequence of xenophobic attitudes deeply embedded in both the structures of the Greek state and portions of its population (ibid: 82).

Taking this fact into consideration, it seems that priority should be given to raising awareness about diversity. Instead of presenting it as an erosion of national homogeneity, it should be seen as a source of cultural enrichment for the creation of 'inclusive nationalism' (Mavroudi, 2010). Education can be employed as a vehicle, to move forward. As Murray (2008: 39) states, "education is the story that society tells about itself. What we teach our children is who we are, or who we want to be". Thus, as the Greek state, at least on paper, aims for the creation of inclusive societies, the role of schools should be one of combating xenophobic and stereotypical attitudes by promoting meaningful intercultural communication and raising multicultural awareness. Since for the time being, the educational policies' implementation, as described above, seems to simply (re)produce an exclusionary national identity based on

homogeneity, the agency of progress could come from the bottom up, from the country's future teachers (Kourti & Androussou, 2013) and the initial teacher training provided to them (Allan, 2011; Cochran-Smith et al., 2018).

Future teachers are the actors by which educational curricula and policies will be interpreted and enacted (Mavroudi & Holt, 2015). Apart from delivering curricula and implementing policies, future teachers will also be educational agents, actively influencing their classrooms and learning environments through their choices and practices. Consequently, with adequate training, future teachers could act as agents of educational change, through disrupting existing inequalities present in the educational structures and materials in order to promote social justice and equal opportunities for all students (Bhopal, 2018; Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Gorski, 2009a). Allan (2011) aptly mentions that in cases where structural barriers, like inadequate educational policies and outdated textbooks, are not addressed on a state level, the burden of supporting pre-service teachers in effectively responding to diversity is placed on teacher training institutions. Pre-service teachers need to be encouraged to perceive diversity as a "central and inevitable element" of the classroom setting, that they should be ready and eager to address (ibid: 135). Future teachers need to understand that diversity is an "asset for educators and societies" and that they should try to make the most out of this "rich resource", treating it as "a source for potential growth rather than an inherent hindrance to student performance" (OECD, 2010: 13). Initial teacher training has a critical role to play towards preparing pre-service teachers for their role as educational agents (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013). Initial teacher training can enhance multicultural competence through offering modules and teaching practice experience grounded in theory, research and critical reflection (Liang & Zhang, 2009; Spinthourakis, 2010). This is especially relevant in Greece, where both the general societal context and the educational policies currently in place seem to promote separation instead of diversity inclusion, as described above. It is thus both timely and interesting to examine if and how initial teacher training in Greece prepares future teachers to be educational agents of change through developing their multicultural competence (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Spinthourakis, 2010; Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013; Pantić & Florian, 2015).

3. Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was deemed the best methodology to answer this study's research questions. Mixed-methods approaches are increasingly gaining popularity in the social sciences in general (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007) and human geography in specific (Elwood, 2010). The foundations for mixing methods were laid in 1989 by the article of Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) and since then, a growing amount of literature advocates the use of mixed-methods approach as a legitimate and insightful way of research design (e.g. Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Creswell, 1994; 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; 2003), particularly in the field of educational related research (e.g. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Mertens, 2010). As Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) put it, mixed methods are particularly valuable for addressing problems within complex educational or social contexts, such as the one forming the backbone of this study.

Tashakkori and Creswell (2007: 4) define mixed-methods as a type of "research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry". The rationale behind mixing both kinds of data is grounded in the fact that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient on their own to fully address the research aim or provide an answer to the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2014). However, when the two are used in combination, they complement each other and allow for a more robust analysis, taking advantage of each other's strengths (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; Morse, 2003). All in all, a mixed-methods approach bridges the gap between the allegedly distinct areas of quantitative and qualitative research methods, drawing elements from both fields, depending on the question under examination, and values both subjective and objective knowledge (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) without privileging a particular way of viewing the world (Philip, 1998).

Mixed methods have the strength to address multiple purposes and thus to meet the needs of multiple audiences (Mertens, 2010). For example, they can bring together the persuasive force of quantitative data for informing policy agendas (Cockley & Awad, 2013) with the emancipatory power of the qualitative approach, which gives voice to the participants and can assist in disseminating research outcomes in ways that are immediately useful to communities (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). Moreover, the use of more than one research method of data

collection minimises the risk of generating erroneous findings, a process commonly referred to as triangulation (see Bryman, 1992; Creswell, 1994, as cited by Philip, 1998), thus maximising validity (Erzberger & Kelle, 2003; Silverman, 2001). As Haywood-Metz (2000) and Gorard and Taylor (2004) put it, the mixed-methods approach in educational research is stronger, more powerful and more effective compared to the use of one single method not only because it simply validates the data collected, but also as it provides a coherent and more integrated understanding shedding light onto different aspects of the topic under research. Based on the aforementioned observations, in the present study, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was not used primarily in order to maximise the validity of the results. Rather, it was mainly employed in order to add breadth and depth to the analysis (Bryman, 1988) and to achieve a better and more holistic understanding of the complex construct examined (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Scott & Morrison, 2005). It is also worth mentioning that the mixed-methods approach chosen for the present study aligns with the call within the discipline of children/youth geographies for more mixed-methods studies, as a means for illuminating different aspects of youth's lives through different kind of data (Graham et al., 2012; McKendrick, 2014, as cited by Holloway, 2014).

For the present study, a mixed-methods explanatory design was chosen. This design is highly popular among researchers in both social and behavioural sciences (e.g. Berliner, Barrat, Fong, & Shirk, 2008; Ivankova & Stick, 2007; Jang, McDougall, Pollon, Herbert, & Russell, 2008; O'Cathain, Murphy, & Nicholl, 2007; Lee & Greene, 2007). Straightforwardness and the opportunity for in-depth exploration of the quantitative findings are commonly referenced as the strengths of this design, with lengthy time and feasibility of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis being its main drawbacks (Ivankova et al., 2006: 5). In the explanatory design, the basic principle is that qualitative data either assists or supplements the process of interpreting quantitative results (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003; Creswell, 2014). Quantitative methods have the first role in this design (Creswell, 2014; Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). The follow-up explanatory model is a specific sub-category of that design that uses qualitative methods to examine certain results produced by the quantitative analysis in more detail (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011: 72; Ivankova et al., 2006). In general, researchers who choose this research design have to take into consideration the weight given to the quantitative and qualitative data in the study, their

sequence and the stage(s) at which both types of data are mixed (Ivankova et al., 2006: 4; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The decision-making process for addressing the aforementioned points was guided by the purpose of the study and its research questions, as well as by the relevant literature regarding previous studies on the topic and are going to be explained in detail in the two following paragraphs.

Concerning the weight and sequence of the data collection, in this study, quantitative data were first collected, having the bigger weight, followed by qualitative ones, as it is normally the case in the explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The goal of the quantitative part was to identify the predictive power of sociodemographic characteristics, multicultural experiences and encounters, attachment to national homogeneity, diversity-related modules attended during teacher training and perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to the teaching practice experience on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence in Greece. The qualitative part then focused on elaborating on the quantitative results (Creswell et al., 2003), seeking to unveil what extra information participants' narratives could offer about the subject matter (i.e. multicultural competence) as well as the factors influencing it. In other words, the quantitative part of this study aimed at identifying the strength and the flows of the relationships between the different variables employed, whereas the qualitative part aimed at providing a deeper understanding of how these relationships play out discursively and how multicultural competence and factors influencing it are conceptualised and experienced by the participants.

Instead of treating the two methods as separate entities, the aim of this study was to use them complimentary. Following Mertens (2010: 431) the two types of data were "intended to have an interactive relationship with the intention of seeing how they might inform each other" (see also Fetters et al., 2013; Wolf, Knodel, & Sittitrai, 1993). Thus, the two methods were mixed since the very beginning, while formulating the study's aim and research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). The two methods were also integrated right after the conduction of a pilot study testing the questionnaire developed for the purpose of collecting the quantitative data. More specifically, the qualitative data collection protocols were informed by the results of the pilot study, which provided a better idea of which topics needed to be taken into consideration while constructing and analysing the qualitative phase of the study (see Ivankova et al., 2006). As Elwood (2010) puts it, using multiple data and

analysis' techniques can enable investigation of multiple causal relationships and provide potential explanations for complex processes.

The remaining part of this chapter is going to outline in detail the methodology used to answer the present study's research questions. The first section outlines the quantitative methods used. More specifically, the first sub-section provides some general information on path model and analysis before presenting the path model constructed for the present study. The following sub-section is devoted at the construction of the variables included in the model before concluding with the sub-section on the questionnaire construction and the outline of the actual quantitative data collection. A section on the qualitative research methods used follows next. The first sub-section provides some evidence on the role of the qualitative research methods in the present study before specifically explaining why focus group discussions were deemed the best way to approach the relevant questions under examination. The following sub-section discusses in detail the factors that need to be taken into consideration while designing a focus group discussion. More specifically, recruitment and number of participants as well as the spatiotemporal context and content of the discussions are outlined. The section concludes with a sub-section on thematic analysis, providing information on how the qualitative data collected have been approached.

3.1. Quantitative Methodology

The quantitative part of this study aimed mainly at examining which factors influence multicultural competence and in what ways they do so using a statistical model. As Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) as well as Mertens (2010) point out, specific attention needs to be paid to the variables chosen for inclusion in a statistical model constructed for explanatory purposes. This is because statistics work on probability theory, so "with enough variables, it is probable that some will appear to be significant" (Mertens, 2010: 164). Thus, the appropriate approach is to include only those variables, for which there is a reason to believe that they are related to the outcome variable, based on previous research and theory (ibid). For this reason, the abovementioned approach was adopted for the purpose of selecting and positioning the variables in the present study's model.

As previously delineated in Chapter 2, sociodemographic characteristics, multicultural experiences and encounters, attachment to national homogeneity, diversity-related university training and teaching practice were all hypothesised to affect multicultural competence on the

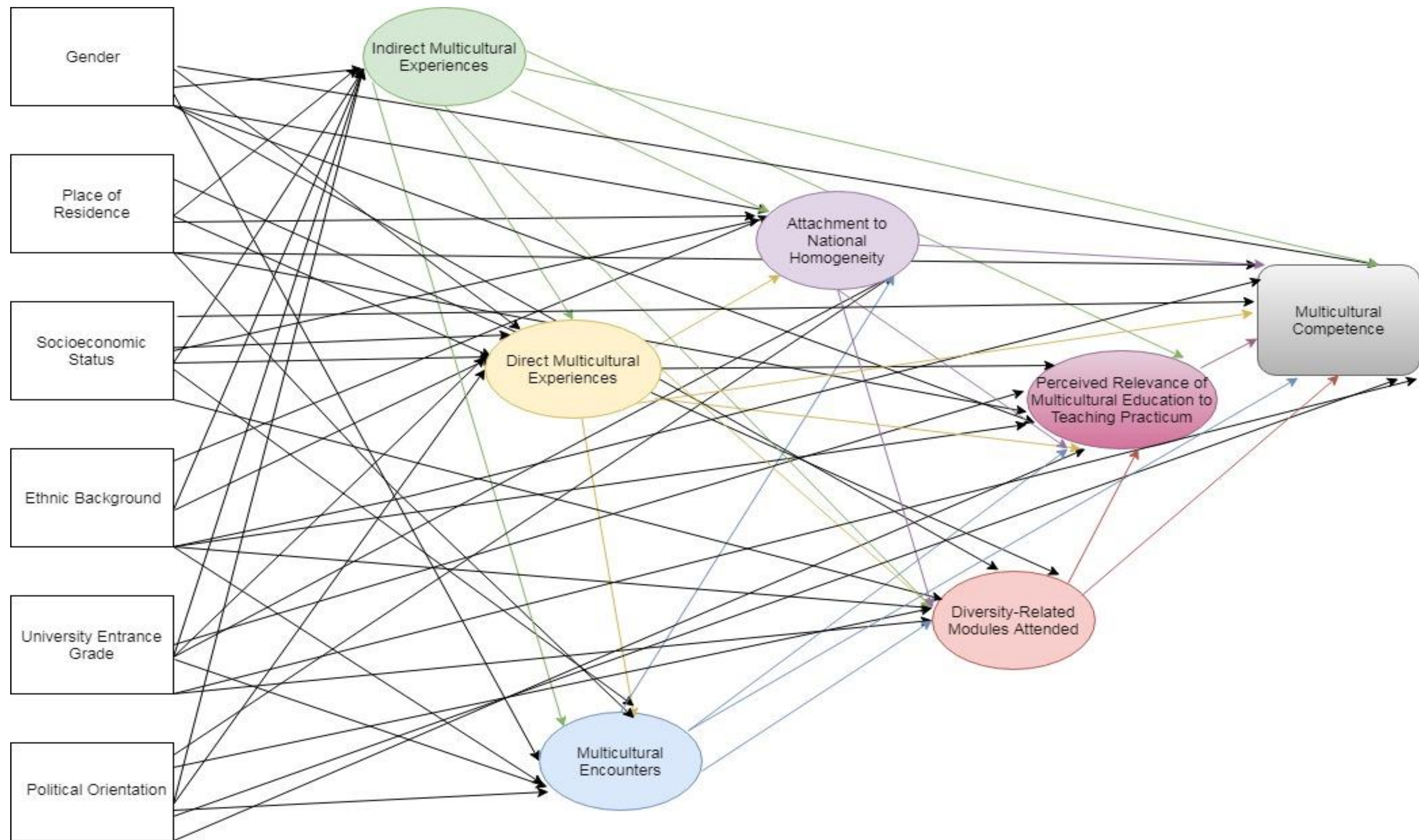
basis of relevant existing literature and theorisations. But the study's research questions sought to identify not only the factors influencing multicultural competence but also the ways in which they do so. In other words, the aim of the quantitative part of the present study was to trace the causal relational network between sociodemographic characteristics, multicultural experiences and encounters, attachment to national homogeneity, diversity-related university training as well as teaching practice and multicultural competence. For this reason, the creation of a path model and the use of path analysis (Duncan, 1966) were considered the best strategy.

Path model and path analysis were chosen for several reasons. First of all, because they are appropriate for theory confirmation (Figueredo & Gorsuch, 2007: 59) or, as Bentler (1989) more specifically puts it, path analysis provides the researcher with the means to fully specify, estimate and test the hypothesised causal network between multiple correlated variables (as cited by Figueredo & Gorsuch, 2007: 59). As Lleras (2005: 25) notes, "[p]ath analysis is a methodological tool that helps researchers using quantitative (correlational) data to disentangle the various (causal) processes underlying a particular outcome". Thus, path model and path analysis afford the testing of all hypotheses formed based upon the literature in a structured and systematic manner. More importantly, though, path analysis was chosen as it "goes beyond regression in that it allows for the analysis of more complicated models" such as those "in which there are "chains" of influence, in that variable A influences variable B, which in turn affects variable C", allowing the intermediate influences to be both understood and calculated (Streiner, 2005: 115). In other words, path analysis allows for the estimation of the direct, indirect and the total effects of the variables, unlike single equation models which estimate only the direct effects and thus run the risk of underestimating "the indirect effect of some variables that actually operate via other variables within the same set" (Cohen & Cohen, 1984: 366). The direct effect represents the independent effect that an independent variable has on the dependent. The indirect effect represents the association of one variable with another, mediated through other variables in the model (Xue, 2006). The total effect represents the sum of the direct and the indirect effect that each independent variable has on the dependent. Total effects from path analyses can be identified through the running of reduced form equations (Alwin & Hauser, 1975; Fox, 1980; Graff & Schmidt, 1982). Alwin and Hauser (1975: 42) summarise the procedure of running a reduced form equation as follows: "For each endogenous (dependent) variable in the model, obtain the

successive reduced-form equations, beginning with that containing only exogenous (predetermined) variables, then adding intervening variables in sequence from cause to effect. The total effect of a variable is its coefficient in the first reduced-form equation in which it appears as a regressor [i.e. as an independent variable]”.

Path analysis is in substance a structural equation model or, in other words, a multivariate (i.e. multiequation) regression model (Fox, 2002). Variables in a structural equation model may influence one-another reciprocally, either directly or indirectly through other intervening variables (ibid). Figure 1 presented in the following page shows the way in which the variables used in the present study were positioned within the path model as well as the flow of the hypothesised statistically significant relations among them. The model presented is a fully specified, unidirectional causal chain, based on the hypothesis that all preceding variables are determinants of the following ones. Path models are read in general from left to right, with the variables on the left predicting the outcome variable on the right (Ben-Eliyahu, 2014).

Figure 1: Sample Model Representation - Path Model Including All Hypothesised Unidirectional Effects of the Variables (i.e. Fully Specified)



Each arrow in the model represents a ‘path’, meaning a hypothesised causal relation, a hypothesised statistically significant effect. To estimate the hypothesised effects, a path analysis was conducted. Path analysis is basically a hierarchical (sequential) multiple regression analysis (Fox, 2002; Wuensch, 2016). In other words, for each endogenous variable, a multiple regression analysis was conducted, “predicting that variable (Y) from all other variables which are hypothesised to have direct effects on Y” (Wuensch, 2016: 2). The unstandardized coefficients of these multiple regressions represent the estimates of all these effects, also known as path coefficients. Each one of them will indicate the units of change in the dependent variable caused by a unit change in the corresponding independent (Falkenberg, 2014).

3.1.1. Description of the Model

The socio-demographic and personal characteristics (gender, place of residence, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, university entrance grade and political orientation) formed the exogenous variables. This means that the causes of these variables lie outside the model (Xue, 2006). Exogenous variables were used to examine their impact on the dependent variable (multicultural competence) but also in order to control for them so as to estimate the net effect of the intervening variables following.

Indirect multicultural experiences formed the first intervening variable as they logically come first compared to the other variables, as foreign language learning, especially in Greece, starts during early childhood, with English being introduced as part of the educational curriculum since Year 1 of Primary School. Moreover, indirect multicultural experiences have been found to be related to direct multicultural experiences (Davcheva, 2003), multicultural encounters, openness/respect towards diversity, curiosity about other cultures (Aba, 2016), as well as multicultural competence (Crowne, 2008; Cui, 2016; Erwin & Coleman, 1998). Consequently, more indirect multicultural experiences were expected to predict more direct multicultural experiences and encounters, less attachment to national homogeneity, engagement with diversity-related modules and heightened multicultural competence.

Direct multicultural experiences represented the next variable introduced. This choice was based on the hypothesis that travelling/studying abroad heightens chances for multicultural encounters, cultivates cosmopolitan attitudes thus reducing attachment to national homogeneity (Mau, Mewes, & Zimmermann, 2008), promotes further enrolment in diversity-

related modules and facilitates multicultural competence (Seidl et al., 2016; Stebleton et al., 2013; Alred, Byram, & Fleming, 2003; Roberts, 2003).

The variable representing multicultural encounters followed as, based on Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) and relevant literature on encounters (Wilson, 2017a), intergroup contact can reduce out-group hostility and in-group favouritism so that it seemed logical to affect attachment to national homogeneity. Along the same lines, it seemed logical that multicultural encounters might heighten curiosity for enrolling in diversity-related modules as well as increase the demands for inclusion of diversity as a basic principle of the teaching practice experience.

The variable of attachment to national homogeneity followed, as this was supposed to discourage attendance of diversity-related modules and decrease multicultural competence. The two final variables inserted were solely related to university life and thus placed at the very end of the model predicting multicultural competence. Diversity-related modules attended preceded perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to the teaching practicum as module attendance comes before teaching practice placements in pre-service teachers' university curricula.

3.1.2. Variable Construction

3.1.2.1. Dependent Variable (Multicultural Competence)

Multicultural Competence formed the dependent variable of the present study. As far as the operationalization of multicultural competence is concerned, an extensive literature review on quantitative measurements used to capture multicultural components in educational settings highlighted that instrument construction should be based on theoretical frameworks so as to "develop items that precisely measure desired constructs" (Sarraj et al., 2015: 232). Thus, this study measured multicultural competence based on the multidimensional conceptualization of multicultural competence proposed by Sue (2001). Sarraj et al. (2015) mentioned that the aforementioned model forms a solid theoretical basis for instrument development and encouraged researchers to utilise it for the development of relevant measurements in other fields apart from counselling.

The instrument used in this study is a byproduct of the combination of two distinct scales previously used to measure multicultural competence, following the proposition made by

Spanierman et al. (2011). The first scale was the ‘Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale’ (MTC) (ibid), comprised of two sub-scales measuring pre-service teachers’ Multicultural Knowledge (MTK) (6 items) and Skills (MTS) (10 items). The second scale was the ‘Teachers’ Multicultural Attitude Survey’ (TMAS) developed by Ponterotto et al. (1998), measuring pre-service teachers’ multicultural awareness and sensitivity (20 items). Retaining the original scale values intact, responses in the first two sub-scales were coded on a 6-point Likert scale of agreement whereas responses to TMAS were based on a 5-point one. When needed, items have been recoded so that higher values indicate higher endorsement of multicultural competence. The above scales were chosen as they have been found to be unaffected by social desirability (Ponterotto et al., 1998; Larson & Bradshaw, 2017) but most importantly, because they have been previously used to measure pre-service teachers’ multicultural competence in the recent study of Fu et al. (2017).

In the present study, each subscale showed high internal consistency (Cronbach’s a = 0.833 for MTK, 0.851 for TMAS and 0.863 for MTS) and the results of the exploratory Principal Component Analysis[5] suggested that this set of subscales captures a single dimension in the present study (i.e. multicultural competence), with three strongly loading items (0.50 or better) with moderate to high item communalities (Osborne & Costello, 2009: 138). More specifically, the multicultural teaching knowledge and attitudes sub-scales had a loading of 0.777 and 0.787 respectively whereas multicultural teaching skills had the highest loading with 0.900[6]. Factor loadings can be interpreted as correlation coefficients, meaning that higher values indicate stronger relationship between the item and the factor. Bearing this in mind, it seems that in the present study, multicultural teaching skills contribute more to the multicultural competence factor, with multicultural attitudes and knowledge following in turn. This is an important point to take into consideration as it shows that between multicultural teaching knowledge, attitudes and skills, the latter is the strand most strongly correlated to multicultural competence.

[5] For the construction of all factors, principal component was used instead of factor analysis because the former does not require any assumption about the underlying structure of the observed variables.

[6] For a detailed presentation of the factors’ characteristics and loadings, see Appendix B, Tables 1-4.

3.1.2.2. Independent Variables

3.1.2.2.1. Multicultural Experiences and Encounters

Following Cui (2016), multicultural experiences were measured by two different variables, one for indirect and one for direct experiences. To measure indirect multicultural experiences, two items were used, corresponding to number of foreign languages spoken and foreign language proficiency. These items were made out of participants' responses to a table included in the questionnaire, asking them to identify their level of proficiency in each one of the foreign languages they spoke. In terms of foreign languages spoken, English, French, German, Italian and Spanish were the options provided, since they form the most popular foreign language choices in Greece (Dendrinos & Theodoropoulou, 2009), but an 'other (please indicate)' option was also available to accommodate any additional languages. Regarding the language proficiency level, participants were called to indicate their level for each one of the options provided between 'none, little, good, very good and excellent'. Responses were finally coded as two items, indicating the sum of foreign languages spoken and the total mean score of foreign language proficiency, with '0' representing no proficiency and '4' representing excellent command. Since the correlation between the two items was very strong (*Pearson's r=0.776*) and the items were fairly uncorrelated with the rest of the variables (Yong and Pearce, 2013: 80), they were finally brought together into a factor indicating indirect multicultural experiences.

Direct multicultural experiences were measured through three items. The first two asked participants to report the amount of travelling that participants had done within and outside Europe. Answers were originally coded on a 4-point Likert scale, with higher values indicating more traveling. A final item asked participants to indicate if they had any experience of studying abroad, with responses finally being coded into a dummy variable (1=yes). All the aforementioned variables were finally turned into a factor indicating direct multicultural experiences. Amount of travelling within Europe had the strongest correlation with the factor (0.786), with travelling outside Europe following (0.674) and studying abroad having the weakest correlation (0.636).

Multicultural encounters were measured through a single item asking participant to indicate the number of friends from a culturally diverse background they have. Answers were coded using a 4-point Likert scale, where 1=none and 4=a lot.

3.1.2.2.2. Attachment to National Homogeneity

Four individual items were used to measure respondents' attachment to national homogeneity, adapted from the first round of the European Social Survey (Jowell & the Central Co-ordinating Team, 2003)[7]. More specifically, respondents had to indicate their preference for 1) the use of common language and 2) common customs and traditions within a country, 3) whether the presence of a variety of religions within a country is for better or for worse and 4) whether the presence of immigrants undermines or enriches the cultural life of a country. Answers were given on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from complete disagreement to complete agreement. Reversed items were recoded so that higher numbers indicated stronger attachment to national homogeneity.

The sum of these items combined variables showing preferences for homogeneity via preservation of a common language, customs and religion, elements which capture the alleged 'basic elements' of Greek national identity (Kakos & Palaiologou, 2014), with a variable directly capturing the perception of perceived 'others' as cultural threat. Moreover, all of them together have previously been found to form a proxy for perceived cultural threat within the Greek context (Sotiropoulou, 2014). For this reason, despite the fact that internal reliability checks indicated a moderately reliable scale (Cronbach's a=0.571) (Hinton, Brownlow, McMurray, & Cozens, 2004: 363), the aforementioned items were computed into a new variable, measuring attachment to national homogeneity.

3.1.2.2.3. Diversity-Related University Training

Two distinct variables were used to measure different aspects of the diversity-related training pre-service teachers received during their studies. The first variable brought together two items measuring the number of diversity-related courses pre-service teachers had attended during their studies and the number of diverse elements that were included in the diversity-related courses participants had attended. For the first item, participants had to indicate the titles of the modules they had attended which were then coded as the sum of modules attended. For the second item, participants were given the following eight options and were asked to select all that applied to them: written final exam, final coursework, weekly

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[7] This round of the ESS was chosen as the only one in which Greek partook and included a complete module covering various aspects of attitudes toward immigration.

coursework (e.g. diary entries), oral presentations, teaching practice in schools, participation in an organisation dealing with diversity issues, visits from people working in organisations dealing with diversity issues and visits from people with a culturally diverse background. Answers were coded as the sum of diverse elements that participants have experienced. Since these two items were strongly correlated with each other (*r=0.710)* and "fairly uncorrelated with the rest of the variables" (Yong & Pearce, 2013: 80), the two items where finally brought together into a factor named 'Diversity-Related Courses Attended'.

Finally, a variable measuring participants' perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to their teaching practicum was included. The variable was measured through a scale, comprised of the sum of 9 item scores. Using a 6-point Likert scale with higher values indicating more relevance, the items included questions on the perception of the classrooms' student composition (e.g. classrooms perceived as multicultural/homogenous), the encouragement and opportunities provided within the teaching practice experience for multicultural education implementation (e.g. used multicultural education leading classroom teacher and multicultural education implementation) as well as the perceived impact of the practicum in the practical implementation of multicultural education. Following George and Mallery (2003: 231), internal reliability of this scale was considered good (Cronbach's a= 0.887),

3.1.2.3. Control Variables (Sociodemographic and Personal Background Characteristics)

Gender, place of residence, ethnic background and socioeconomic status were regarded as relevant axes of social difference for the purpose of this study. Regarding gender, participants were called to self-determine their gender identity through an open-ended question. Responses were then coded into a dummy variable (1=Female) as no other responses apart from 'female' and 'male' were recorded. Place of residence was measured through an open-ended question. Answers were recorded based on the degree of urbanization to 1= 'village', 2='small town', 3= 'large city (i.e. prefectural capital)' and 4= 'metropolitan city (Athens/Thessaloniki)'. Responses were finally coded into a dummy variable were 0= 'village/small town' and 1= 'large town/metropolitan city'. Ethnic background was coded as a dummy variable (0= Greek and 1=other). This variable was brought together based on the responses that participants gave on three open questions, asking them to indicate their mother's, father's and their own country of origin. If participants indicated a country other

than Greece in any of the aforementioned questions, then they were coded as being form an ethnically diverse background. Regarding socioeconomic status, following Mueller and Parcel (1981), this was measured through a factor comprised of father's and mother's occupation and level of education, as well as familial income. The variable was operationalised as the first principal component [8] of father's and mother's occupation, education and family income. As far as occupation is concerned, respondents indicated separately their father's and mother's occupation through an open-ended question. Responses were then coded according to the Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS), as presented by Ganzeboom and Treiman (1996). Parents' level of education was measured on an 11-point scale, ranging from 'attending some classes of primary school' to 'pursuing postgraduate studies', with higher numbers indicating higher levels of education. Regarding familial income, respondents had to choose the appropriate answer among the following categories: 1= under 10.000€, 2= 10.001-20.000€, 3= 20.001-30.000€, 4= 30.001-40.000€, 5= 40.001-50.000€ and 6= over 50.000€. Finally, as mentioned in the Literature Review chapter on the factors influencing multicultural competence, two more personal background characteristic variables were thought to be of interest for the present study: previous educational attainment and political orientation. Previous educational attainment was operationalised using participants' indicated university entrance grade, which is a combination of their national exams scores and school grades in their final year of upper high school. Political orientation was measured using participants' self-identification responses on a 10-point semantic differential scale, where the only two points indicated were 1=far right and 10-far left.

3.1.3. Quantitative Data Collection

As mentioned previously in the introductory chapter, lack of relevant research in non-traditional multicultural societies and small sample sizes are two of the main issues in examining factors influencing multicultural competence. In an attempt to overcome these limitations, primary data had to be collected for the present study examining a novel context

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[8] Because of the relatively large number of missing values for mother's occupation (*n*=128), the index used was the first principal component of all five variables for those cases reporting mother's occupation, and the first principal component of the other four variables for cases missing mother's occupation. In both instances, the index was based on cases for which none of the other variables was missing. For all the indices and the analyses in this study, only cases for which none of the variables was missing were used.

like Greece. As Kitchin and Tate (2000: 47) state, surveys are usually employed to collect primary data. Consequently, a questionnaire survey was chosen as the most appropriate way to obtain the data needed for the quantitative analysis of the present study, based also on previous studies carried out on the topic employing this technique for data collection (Spinthourakis et al., 2009; Sas, 2009; Cui, 2016; Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2016; Fu et al., 2017).

Questionnaire surveys can, under certain circumstances, provide the opportunity for generalization of the findings from the initial sample to the population. Some of the relevant provisos that need to be taken into consideration while designing a questionnaire survey with generalisability potential are the study's sample and its size as well as the sampling technique (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). For the present study, pre-service teachers, (i.e. student teachers) were chosen as the relevant population. The justification was based on the fact that primary school is the first obligatory level of education in Greece, usually constituting the first educational experience for the majority of culturally diverse students. Moreover, Del Barco, Mira and Gómez Carroza (2007: 275) previously found that pre-service primary school teachers tend to keep a greater distance from culturally diverse students and have the strongest tendency to avoid immigrant contact, compared to early-childhood and high school educators. It thus made sense to focus on future elementary school teachers. As the undergraduate teacher training programs in Greece are four years long, senior (fourth) year students in specific were selected as this study's population, as they were expected to have completed their diversity-related course-attendance and required teaching practice before graduation. Moreover, as Polat and Ogay Braka (2014: 27) mention, multicultural competence should be at its highest developmental stage at the end of the teacher education process.

Regarding sample size, in order for the sample to be adequate and representative, the estimation of the sample size was of vital importance. As the main statistical method proposed for this study was path analysis (Duncan, 1966), the sample size required was estimated following the formula proposed by Milton (1986: 114-115). The calculation indicated a minimum sample of 333 for a model seeking to explain around 20% of the variance in multicultural competence. The total of 356 valid questionnaires collected fulfils this prerequisite, forming an adequate sample.

Finally, regarding the sample technique followed, as the aim of the present study was to have a nationally representative sample, a single-stage, stratified random sampling (Kitchin & Tate, 2000: 55) was used for the present study. More specifically, the 9 departments of primary education in Greece were divided into three groups of 3 departments each, roughly corresponding to categories of both city population (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2012) and induction grade (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2013). The division criterion was the induction grade needed to enter in each department through the national exams. The choice was based on the fact that previous educational achievement has been found to affect Greek pre-service teachers' multicultural competence in the past (Spinthourakis et al., 2009), which meant that induction grade could be used to stratify the sample, minimizing the standard error (Warwick & Lininger, 1975 as cited by Milton, 1986: 115). An invitation for participation in the study, delineating its content and purpose, was forwarded via email to each Head of the 9 departments. Three departments responded to the invitation email expressing their interest to participate. Conveniently, the departments that responded belong to different strata based on the induction grade. Consequently, one department was selected from each stratum and all senior year students from the selected departments comprised the sample of the study. The three departments examined in the study were: 1) a department of Primary Education in Central Greece, 2) another in Southern Greece with 3) the final one being located in Northern Greece.

3.1.4. Questionnaire Construction

A cover letter introduced the questionnaire used for data collection. The letter provided information regarding the purpose of the study, the use of the data, assured anonymity and confidentiality, while also thanking the participants in advance for their time and assistance. The actual questionnaire content was divided in 4 parts[9]. The first one was entitled 'Contact with Diversity' and mostly included closed-type questions, requiring participants to rate their level of multicultural experiences and encounters. The second section was entitled 'Diversity-Related Training during University Studies'. This section included items asking participants to mention if they had attended any diversity-related modules during their teacher training. If positively responding, participants had to fill in a table, mentioning the title of the modules they had attended, the year and frequency of attendance as well as the grade received for the

[9] A sample of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

module. A separate question asked them to select all options that applied for the modules they had attended regarding diverse course content and assessment elements. Finally, a block of questions asked them to rate the relevance of multicultural education implementation to their teaching practice experience. The third section was entitled 'Personal Opinions' and included the three scales measuring participants multicultural teaching skills, knowledge and attitudes as well as four extra items corresponding to participants' views on national homogeneity. The questionnaire closed with a section entitled 'Demographic Characteristics', including items related to participants' socio-economic and personal background.

In June 2016, a pilot study was carried out, testing the completion time and content of the questionnaire. After contacting the Head of the Department and faculty member in charge of the teaching practice in a department of Primary Education in Southern Greece, an agreement was reached for the administration of the questionnaires. As requested by the Head of the Department, 200 questionnaires were posted to the Head's office to be distributed internally to senior (i.e. 4th year) undergraduate students. It was made clear through previous communication that apart from filling in the questionnaires, students would be required to provide some feedback regarding the clarity of the question content and the completion time.

A total of 100 questionnaires were handed out on the day of their teaching practice portfolio submission, at the end of their last semester of studies. Questionnaires were distributed to the students by the Head of the Department. The students had the choice either to complete the questionnaire on the spot or to take it home with them and leave it in the professors' pigeonhole at their earliest convenience within two days. Anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided were granted following the ethical protocol of Loughborough University's Human Participants Ethics' Sub-Committee.

The return rate was at 50%, so 50 questionnaires ($N=50$) were collected from the Head of the Department at the end of June 2016. Feedback regarding clarity of questionnaire content was positive, with no clarifications needed and completion time was estimated at 15-20 minutes. In general, based on the data collected from this pilot study, I ran some initial statistical analysis so as to get a rough idea of statistically significant effects arising. Findings showed that higher familial socioeconomic status and greater attachment to national homogeneity predicted lower levels of multicultural competence whereas experience of studying abroad and perceived inclusion of diversity in teaching practice predicted higher ones. These initial

findings were used to inform the content and the thematic axes of analysis for my focus group discussions, following (Merriam, 19998) who states that results of preliminary analysis should be used to improve the quality and focus of following data collection and analysis.

The study's main fieldwork and data collection took place roughly a year after the pilot study, between May-June 2017. That timing was strategically chosen as appropriate, since it was a prerequisite for the participating pre-service teachers to have completed their final year teaching practice, which takes place in the spring semester, normally finishing between the end of May and beginning of June. Based on an established network with the faculty member in charge of the final year teaching practice in each department, specific dates were pre-arranged for my visit in each department for the distribution of the questionnaires to the final year undergraduate students of the BA in Primary Education. In order to maximise participation, the questionnaire distribution was purposefully arranged to take place at the end or beginning of a module with mandatory attendance, depending on the facilitator's availability. Based on the appropriate dates indicated by the relevant faculty members in each department for the questionnaire distribution, the Department of Primary Education in Central Greece was visited first, the on in Northern Greece followed with Southern Greece being my final fieldwork destination. All in all, 356 questionnaires were collected across the three departments, an adequate number for reaching the threshold for a representative sample as previously described in section 3.1.3.

3.2. Qualitative Methodology

Quantitative data analysis takes for granted participants' conceptualisations and experiences of the topic under examination and is thus restricted in providing evidence on participants' perspectives. In general, participants' voices are not directly heard in quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Ponterotto, Mathew and Raughley (2013) though claim that including participants' voices forms the most genuine, empowering and powerful tool for enhancing analytic conclusions. Looking specifically at the field of educational-related research, although the importance of treating young people as subjects rather than objects of educational research has been highlighted (Holloway et al., 2010), human geographers still point out that young people's voices are not often brought up within the field of geographies of education (Mills & Kraftl, 2015: 22). Towards this direction, Hopwood (2011) has highlighted the need to take seriously young people's views regarding education and their conceptions of learning in geographical research.

Thus, the qualitative phase of this study aimed at including participants' voices and experiences as a way to gain more in-depth perspectives of the statistical results regarding multicultural competence and the factors influencing it (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2014; Elwood, 2010: 96). It is commonly accepted that focus groups are a valuable research method for exploratory and confirmatory reasons, including things such as "…gaining background information, clarifying ideas, developing questions, and understanding group reactions to particular problems, processes and patterns" (Skop, 2006: 114). Besides these points, focus groups are compatible with a socially embedded form of research that values the knowledge that participants have to offer and that has the potential to rework theories and concepts from the ground up (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; Bosco & Herman, 2010; Wolf et al., 1993) as well as bring more transparency to the process of knowledge production (Bosco & Herman, 2010: 194). Goss (1996) elaborates upon this statement arguing that the stories collectively generated through the performance of a focus group provide a better reflection of the social nature of knowledge than a collection of individual narratives that one can assemble through interviews. This is particularly important as it addresses one of the main criticisms that survey methods receive, the one of imposing the researchers' preconceived theoretical concerns on the research subjects (Wolf et al., 1993; Secor, 2010). Thus, the conduction of focus groups was deemed to be the most appropriate qualitative strategy for the purpose of this study. This had firstly to do with previous assertions according to which focus groups are an effective and efficient way to get insights into both group and individual perspectives in a limited amount of time (Patton, 2002). Moreover, focus group discussions are claimed to provide data that reflect more social norms than individual experiences and are thus outlined as complimentary to data collected through questionnaire surveys (Ward, Bertrand, & Brown, 1991; Wolf et al., 1993; Secor, 2010). Wolf et al. (1993) point out that mixing survey with focus groups in a study can enhance the quality of the analysis and the confidence placed in it. More specifically, the survey component enhances the external validity or representativeness of the study, whereas the focus group reinforces internal validity and provides the potential for the generation of new hypotheses (ibid; Secor, 2010).

According to Bedford and Burgess (2001), focus-groups are efficient for gaining insight into how people's construct social issues, share their knowledge, experiences and prejudices and argue for their different points of view (see also Ward et al., 1991; Secor, 2010). From a more

geographical perspective, Cameron (2000, as cited by Bosco & Herman, 2010) argues that focus groups provide a useful tool for disentangling the multiple meanings that people attribute to relationships and places. Moreover, focus groups are identified as a useful tool for gaining access to tacit knowledge, opinions and meanings (Hopkins, 2007; Secor, 2010). Krueger and Casey (2009) mention that focus groups are specifically suitable for investigating attitudes and experiences of people that have something in common (i.e. in my case all senior undergraduate students of primary education). Intra-group homogeneity is in fact praised as an essential focus group trait (Morgan, 1996; Conradson, 2005; Bedford & Burgess, 2001), as people tend to feel more comfortable with others with whom they share particular similarities (Morgan, 1996). Homogeneity among participants contributes to the creation of a safe-space atmosphere of mutual respect, in which participants can freely express themselves.

Focus groups' main distinctive characteristic is their dynamic nature, as the individuals participating in them are free to challenge or amplify the interpretations/beliefs of others in the group (Bedford & Burgess, 2001), "allowing for meanings to be shared and elaborated upon through group interaction" (Guo et al., 2009: 6). In other words, focus groups rely on group members' interaction to widen the range of responses, activate forgotten details of individual experiences or release inhibitions which might otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information (Morgan & Krueger, 1998). During focus group discussions, often, unexpected opinions and statements lead to surprising discussions, and conversations emerge that could not have been anticipated (Bosco & Herman, 2010). Analytically, paying attention to the twists arising during the conversation is important, as they can provide useful information on the identification of areas of agreement and controversy, similarity and difference in order to understand how group interactions modify perspectives and produce new knowledge (Kidd & Parshall, 2000, as cited by Bosco & Herman, 2010). This intra-group dynamic and the focus groups' dialogic nature minimise the researchers' involvement and thus participants are more likely to open up, without feeling their knowledge compromised by the higher status of a research-expert (Guo et al., 2009; Pratt, 2002; Hopkins, 2007; Bosco & Herman, 2010). Precisely because knowledge is produced by and for its subjects through the collective experience, it has been argued that focus groups might generate critical, emancipatory knowledge as opposed to knowledge that is appropriated from research subjects through the more traditional methods of research in social science, such as

surveys (Goss & Leinbach, 1996, as cited by Bosco & Herman, 2010; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). Bosco and Herman (2010) argue that focus group discussions might even lead participants to publicly or privately reconsidering their own positions.

3.2.1. Focus Groups: Construction and Conduction

3.2.1.1. Participant Recruitment

According to Rabiee (2004), in order to maximise participation in focus groups, an agreed date is important to be obtained from the informants well in advance. In an attempt to achieve that, a call for participation in the focus group discussions was circulated in each department that agreed to participate in the study, through departmental social media pages as well as the final year mass mailing list. The focus group participants' sampling was convenient, based on availability and response to the call for participation. The call outlined the discussion content and the potential date range in which the discussion could take place. It also informed the participants about their estimated time commitment and stated that participation was voluntary with anonymity and data confidentiality being assured. Interested participants were invited to contact me in person to suggest their availability and/or request any further information or explanations needed. The call made it clear that two discussions were going to be carried out in each department and that discussion allocation, timing and place were to be decided based on participants' availability and request. Based on the participants' response to the call, two focus group discussions per department were held on a commonly agreed day, time and place after the questionnaire completion.

3.2.1.2. Number of Participants

The ideal number of participants for a focus group discussion varies in the relevant literature from two (Longhurst, 1996; Toner, 2009) to approximately ten (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). Although the number of participants is an issue of importance for focus groups, this is not in and of itself. On the contrary, it is related to the sensitivity of the discussion topic as well as the location of the meeting and the practical constraints of recruiting, such as willingness, accessibility and time availability (Conradson, 2005). As the purpose of the present study was an in-depth examination of multicultural competence and required sharing of past and present personal experiences within and outside university, a smaller number of participants (i.e. between 4 and 5) was deemed ideal. This choice was further backed up by previous research carried out on the topic recruiting a similar number of participants (Guo et al., 2009; Acquah

& Commins, 2013). According to Liamputtong (2011), fewer participants provide more room for members to express themselves and explore the topics under discussion in greater detail, often leading to more relevant and interesting data. All in all, a small group of people sharing a basic characteristic (i.e. all final-year undergraduate students of primary education) was thought to be a fertile ground for an active discussion to evolve (Smithson, 2008) on a matter of importance to everyone, providing space and time for every participant's voice to be heard.

In the focus groups conducted, participants ranged between 3 and 7. As participation was based on a voluntary basis, there was a drop-out due to illness from one participant in the second focus group discussion carried out in Central Greece, leaving the discussion with just three participants. Moreover, another participant from the final focus group carried out in Southern Greece had to leave the discussion early, as she received an emergency call from her employer. All discussions were carried out smoothly, with no dominant speakers arising. Participants seemed to actively engage with the topics under discussion and conversation flowed naturally. For this reason, my role only consisted in moderating the conversation. I barely had to intervene and when I did so, this was to pose follow-up questions in order to elicit more information, clarify comments made or help the conversation move onwards. In general, participants seemed to have enjoyed being part of the focus group discussions. This became evident through praising comments they made at the end of the conversation regarding the content of the discussion and the reflection it encouraged on important topics as well as the excitement they felt that someone asked for their opinions particularly on issues related to their university experience and studies' satisfaction.

3.2.1.3. Spatiotemporal Context

Context and time can and normally do influence focus group discussions (Hopkins, 2007). The context in which the focus groups will be conducted can influence the atmosphere of the discussion. For example, focus groups run in a scholastic environment normally follow the "rules of the school as a social setting" (ibid: 532) and can be compromised by the presence of an authoritative figure, like a professor or a head of the department (ibid). Moreover, location should be selected so as to maximise research participants' comfort and privacy (Secor, 2010). Conducting the focus groups in a location chosen by the participants was deemed beneficial, as the choice of a familiar surrounding space should have given participants a sense of comfort while dealing with me, the facilitator 'stranger'. Bosco and Herman (2010) provide a relevant example of how a classroom setting provides a familiar

context for focus group participants who are students, having the potential to enhance their feelings and insights on the topic under discussion. Time has similar effects and thus attention needs to be paid both at the specific day and part of it, during which the discussion is going to take place (Hopkins, 2007). Consequently, place and timing for the conduction of the present study's focus group discussions needed to be taken into consideration so as to maximise participation and data quality.

For these reasons, in the present study, the place and time of the focus group discussions' conduction was chosen by the participants in advance. Moreover, to establish a safe-space, with a pleasant atmosphere for the conduction of the discussions, it was ensured that no authority figure will be present and that the discussion's tone would be quite informal and relaxed. The pre-arrangement was crucial as participants' academic schedule was quite loaded. More specifically, term-time was about to finish but the summer exam period was about to start, which meant that submissions related to modules or teaching practice were due.

As a consequence, in Central Greece, the first discussion took place in the Departmental café whereas the second one took place in a café in the centre of the town, both in the evening, after academic-related obligations were dealt with. In Northern Greece, both focus groups were conducted in a social learning space nearby the Departmental Library, after finishing attending a mandatory module. Finally, in Southern Greece, both discussions took place in a meeting room within the department, straight after the end of the final briefing session regarding the teaching practice portfolio submissions. All spaces were appropriate for the discussion conduction and no problems arose.

A final issue that needs to be taken into consideration, being related to but also extending the literal meaning of spatiotemporal context, is what Hopkins (2007) refers to as the influence of the geopolitical context. In the present study, this was anticipated to play out with a focus on refugees. As mentioned extensively in the part of Chapter 2 describing the case study context (Section 2.3.), Greece has been hosting a large number of refugees since 2015, mostly due to the unstable political situation in Middle Eastern countries. This refugee wave has been faced with the general public's skepticism, if not opposition (Pew Research Centre, 2016), influenced by the general negative framing of the refugee 'crisis' from the media and politicians. More specifically, despite the decrease in refugee arrivals to the country since

2015, refugees keep on being a hot topic within the Greek state of affairs. The most recent trend focuses on the accommodation of refugee children within the Greek educational system. Refugee children are permitted by law (Law 2910/2001) to fully attend school, independent of their status. Based on that, since the academic year 2016-2017, the Greek government's provision for the integration of refugee children in the school system has been attendance of classes taking place after the end of the regular school timetable, hosted in school premises corresponding to the refugee's area of residence (Law 4415/2016, Joint Ministerial Decision 139654 /ΓΔ4/2017). This idea, although welcomed in some cases, has also brought up waves of opposition, mainly from parents' associations, especially in Northern Greece. Extreme cases of padlocking the school premises to deny refugee access to the school (Squires, 2016) and general negative comments framing refugee children as bearers of diseases and a threat to the national values have been recorded and publicised worldwide (e.g. Kougiannou, 2016; Petrakis, 2016).

It thus seemed logical to assume that these events were going to influence the focus group discussions with pre-service teachers, possibly by increasing the intensity of discussion or even bringing out anger or frustration about political affairs. As will become clear in Chapter 5 were the analysis of the qualitative findings will be presented, refugees were one of the main categories that participants associated with cultural diversity in Greece and the integration of refugee students in Greek education featured highly in all conversations conducted.

3.2.1.4. Content

Discussions were carried out in Greek and were transcribed to assist data analysis at a later stage. All in all, six focus groups discussions were conducted across the three departments, in which questionnaires were distributed. More specifically, two focus groups per department were carried out, with participants' number ranging between three and seven. Discussions lasted between an hour and a half and two and a half hours, close to the mean estimated time for focus group conduction (Rabiee, 2004).

As mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, the mixing of the two different types of data in the present study took place also during the data collection. In order to assist the data integration process in a mixed-method study with an initial quantitative part utilizing an instrument based on a series of scales, Castro, Kellison, Boyd, and Kopak (2010) suggest the

use of similar questions to the ones used in the questionnaire for the purpose of qualitative data collection. On top of that, Merriam (1998) suggests the use of findings from one method to improve the content and focus of the other. Thus, both preliminary findings from the quantitative pilot study and the different topics covered through the questionnaire survey were used to inform the content and the thematic axes of analysis for the focus group discussions.

Following that principle, the idea for this study's focus group discussion was based on a so called "semi-structured focus group" design (Secor, 2010: 201). In this design, the researcher-facilitator has a predetermined guide ready, a set of questions arranged in a way that will ensure, to the extent possible, the development of a logical and engaging discussion (ibid). The role of the focus group facilitator in this type of focus group is to keep the group "'focused' through a set of prepared questions and prompts" (Morgan, 1996, as cited by Bosco & Herman, 2010: 193). Finally, during focus groups, a facilitator, asks follow-up questions in order to clarify any blurry responses, but also as a way to "extend the participants' narratives" (Secor, 2010: 201).

More specifically, through the use of focus groups, I aimed at gaining in-depth understandings of participants' experiences with and conceptualisations of the following aspects:

1) attachment to national homogeneity
2) approach in addressing culturally diverse students and their education
3) understanding of multicultural competence and relevance of the concept for their professional career
4) experience of diversity-related training received from university modules and the teaching practice

Each one of these aspects was directly linked to at least one part of the focus group discussion and related to my pilot study findings. This connection is going to be explained in detail below.

Focus groups normally start with a warm-up period (ibid). In this study, this was achieved through a round of introductions with some basic information-sharing between the

participants (i.e. name and place of residence) and through the setting-out of the discussion rules (i.e. avoid interruption when someone is talking/talking over other participants; there is no 'right' answer; just offer your honest, personal opinions and experiences, etc.).

After the introductions were completed, the first set of prompts was used[10], with the aim of fostering discussion and debate on aspects 1 and 2 of the above list. Participants were provided with a copy of two pictures, challenging two of the basic principles of the perceived 'three dimensions of Greekness', i.e. Greek descent, language and Christian Orthodox faith (Chrysoloras, 2004; Kakos & Palaiologou, 2014; Pavlou et al., 2005) while also dealing with the educational context too. The first picture showed a black boy holding the Greek flag while embracing his young white, Greek friend, after the end of a school parade whereas the second picture showed a girl wearing a head scarf carrying the Greek flag in a national parade. The main idea for using these prompts was to encourage participants to talk about a hot topic for Greek educational reality, that of having culturally diverse students carrying the flag in parades celebrating Greece's national commemoration days.

The celebration of national commemoration days has been viewed as one of the aspects denoting the ethnocentric orientation of the Greek educational curriculum (Michalelis, Tsioumis, Kyridis, Papageridou, & Sotiropoulou, 2015; Tsimouris, 2008). Parades form the top event organised as part of the commemorations, are loaded with national symbols like the Greek flag and are held to strengthen and (re)produce the national identity and unity (Michalelis et al., 2015). As becomes clear, the flag bearer is a prestigious position, thus defined by law based upon academic excellence and accessible only to senior students of each school. However, the fact that during the past few years, in some instances the highest achiever happened to be a culturally diverse student became an issue of controversy, bringing to the surface fierce debates regarding representation and belonging across school communities, the Media and the general public (ibid). The first relevant cases took place around the early 2000s, with Albanian immigrant students starring as the object of criticism and resulted, in a lot of cases, in students resigning of their rights to hold the Greek flag (Baldwin-Edwards, 2003; Tsimouris, 2008; Tzanelli, 2006). The topic however came back in the spotlight right before the focus group conduction in the summer of 2017, due to the

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[10] See Appendix F, Set A.

government's proposal to change the criterion of the determination of the flag bearer for primary schools from educational excellence (i.e. highest grades) to a draw procedure including all Year 6 students. The suggestion was approved and published in the government's gazette in August 1st 2017 as a presidential decree (Presidential Decree 79/2017, 2017). As a current affair topic, the flag bearer profile was anticipated to bring to the surface issues around attachment to national homogeneity, which, based on the pilot study, was found to exert a detrimental effect on multicultural competence. Participants were just asked to take some time to look at the pictures and then comment upon them.

The discussion went forward with another topic grappling more explicitly with Greekness and national homogeneity, that of the recent law change regarding citizenship granting to second generation immigrants. This might seem a bit unrelated to education. However, my idea was to start from the general societal space and then narrow the discussion down to education, so that I could get a more holistic perspective of participants' stances towards diversity, tracing webs of connections between the national, social and educational spaces with personal experiences in participants' multicultural competence. All in all, this part of the discussion was supposed to bring to the surface more on participants' attitudes towards national homogeneity and political orientation (aspect 1).

As mentioned in the literature review, this new citizenship law is undisputedly a step forward in Greece's diversity management policy, but when the law was finally approved in July 2015, it was not unanimously supported by the Greek Parliament, with 3 out of the 7 parties voting against it. Among the opponents were the right-wing 'Independent Greeks' party (ANEL), which, along with the left-wing party 'SYRIZA', make up the current coalition government. This is why the first element of the second set of prompts[11] provided to the participants was a headliner of a mainstream newspaper, quoting the words of the governments' vice-president and ANEL leader, Panos Kammenos. His words were against citizenship granting to second generation migrants. As a contradiction, the second element of the prompt featured a black girl during a demonstration, standing in front of a banner supporting the new citizenship law. Thus, participants were exposed to prompts both for and

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[11] See Appendix F, Set B.

against the new law and were called to freely contribute with their opinions/thoughts on the topic always supporting their comments with arguments.

After this point, the discussion focused on the educational context. The transition was made using the third set of prompts[12]. This time, a newspaper headline from the 2015-16 vice Minister of Education, Theodosis Pelegrinis, formed the first prompt. The headline highlighted the minister's wish for a bigger presence of Greek students in the country's intercultural schools. The other prompt was more recent and stemmed from the attempt to incorporate the refugee children in the Greek educational system through the organisation of after-school classes within regular school units in close proximity of refugee reception centres. As previously mentioned, this idea faced resistance in some cases. One such negative response was a joint announcement published by parents' associations of schools in Central and Northern Greece, disapproving the running of classes for refugees within their associated school premises, which was the second element provided to the participants as part of this set of prompts. Based on those two prompts, participants were firstly called to express their views on the existence and consistency of intercultural schools in Greece. Going one step forward, participants were also asked to justify their preference for either separated or mixed classrooms for Greek and culturally diverse students and offer their opinions on their ideal way of integrating culturally diverse students in the Greek educational system. The background logic behind this idea was to gain an in-depth perspective of how participants discursively create and manage intercultural education and culturally diverse students within the Greek educational reality (aspect 2).

The next step in the discussion was a focus on the role of the educator in current multicultural classrooms. The final set of prompts (multicultural classroom pictures)[13] was presented to the participants to initiate the discussion. Participants were called to comment upon the consistency of the student population, the things they would need to consider while teaching each group and the challenges that the educators in each one of the classrooms depicted would have to face (aspects 2 and 3). Remaining in the role of the educator, participants were next presented with a hypothetical scenario adapted from a recent study concerning the

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[12] See Appendix F, Set C.

[13] See Appendix F, Set D.

development of teachers' intercultural sensitivity (Rissanen et al., 2016: 450). Although the scenario was originally used as a prompt for diary entries, in the present study participants were called to brainstorm on the topic imagining themselves as classroom teachers. The background logic of using this scenario was for me to gain some insights on the participants' multicultural competence (aspects 2 and 3). More specifically, the scenario prompted reflection on how participants would handle imaginary situations in a classroom background. The final scenario used reads as follows:

> '*In your class, there are some students with an immigrant background who you steadily observe that they are underperforming. Could you please tell me why do you think this might be the case and can you offer some ideas on how you could support these students' learning so as for them to improve?*'

After ideas have been discussed on the aforementioned prompts, the concept of multicultural competence was introduced. More specifically, participants were asked to brainstorm regarding the meaning of the concept (aspect 3). The aim of this was to see is if the concept of multicultural competence was given a different meaning by the students compared to the one that is imposed to them by the relevant theories, which formed the basis for the construction of the questionnaire distributed for the quantitative analysis in this study.

After that, however, a short definition of the term and its three key elements (i.e. multicultural knowledge, attitudes and skills) were introduced by me so that participants understood the way I used the term for the purpose of the study and also so that we could all have a common point of reference regarding this term for the remaining part of the discussion. Participants were then asked to comment upon whether or not they thought multicultural competence was a useful competence for future teachers (aspect 3).

The next part of the discussion focused on the university context and the relevant diversity-related training participants received throughout their studies. Following the focus group aim of Acquah and Commins (2013) and Guo et al. (2009), in this part I aimed at obtaining information on whether or not students think that their university training (i.e. both modules attended and experience gained through teaching practice) helped them enhance their multicultural competence. Diversity-related modules attended were proven to be the most challenging topic to gain information for through the questionnaire in the pilot study carried

out. More specifically, only 36 responses were obtained out of the 50 participants. Moreover, most of the data collected were mostly centred around the number of modules attended as opposed to focusing on the quality and content of these courses. That was also the case regarding the effect of teaching practice. Consequently, I hoped that the focus group discussion was going to provide me with a better insight on the effect of the course content and teaching practice experience on multicultural competence (aspect 4).

The focus group discussions concluded asking for participants' suggestions on how future teachers could become more multiculturally competent, focusing on changes that could happen both within and outside the university setting.

3.2.2. Qualitative Data Analysis Approach

Qualitative analysis is a meaning-making process rather than a search for truth. Having this premise in mind, data in this study were approached with an aim of representing the participants' subjective viewpoints, experiences and perceptions related to multicultural competence. As Rabiee (2004: 657) puts it, data analysis begins straight from the data collection stage, by skilfully facilitating the focus group discussion to generate rich data. It was thus considered important to have first-hand experience of the data, to ensure the quality and relevance of data collected as well as to manage any potential dominant discussants. Thus, all discussions were facilitated by me. After the discussions, I spent time further familiarising myself with the data. This was managed through listening to the recorded discussions, transcribing them and reading the produced transcripts in their entirety several times. The aim of this process was to "immerse in the details" and get a sense of the data as a whole, before start breaking it into parts (ibid).

As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, the focus group discussions followed the quantitative data collection in the present study and were thus influenced by the questionnaire content and the preliminary results of the quantitative pilot study carried out during the summer of 2016. For this reason, a thematic analysis was chosen as the best way to approach the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is defined as the identification of thematic axes that are important for the description of the phenomenon under research (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). As Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006: 82) put it, "[i]t is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories of analysis".

In the present study, themes were identified through a combination of deductive and inductive coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The pilot study's quantitative findings formed the basis for the deductive coding. Codes established through this process included themes that were either significant findings (e.g. the importance of attachment to national homogeneity and perceived inclusion of diversity in the teaching practice experience) or topics on which data was not sufficient from the pilot quantitative study (e.g. diversity-related courses attended). These codes were used a priori, as a guide to find matching meaningful units of texts. However, new codes also emerged inductively, through visiting and revisiting the data (Boyatzis, 1998). These additional codes either expanded upon the predetermined deductive ones or were entirely new. After that, codes were clustered so as to lead to overarching themes that could be used to make sense of the data in meaningful ways, keeping always in mind potential relationships identified between the various themes.

All in all, the process that I followed for the qualitative data analysis matches the one described by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) and Rabiee (2004). It can be summarised as including the following steps: a) familiarisation with the data b) thematic framework identification, c) indexing, d) charting, e) mapping and f) interpretation. During the familiarisation stage, the first major themes began to emerge. However, themes were systematically put together in a coherent framework in the next stage. This was achieved through the development of categories by writing notes in the margins of the text in the form of short phrases, ideas or concepts matching the text content. Indexing comprised of "sifting the data, highlighting and sorting out quotes and making comparisons both within and between cases" while charting "involved lifting the quotes from their original context and re-arranging them under the newly-developed appropriate thematic content" (Rabiee, 2004: 657-658). The final steps included the mapping-out and the sense-making of the remaining, relevant data.

3.3. Ethics and Positionality

Ethical practice is vital for a high-quality geographical research. According to Hay (2003), ethical behaviour protects the rights of the participants involved in the study, helps in the creation of a favourable atmosphere for the research conduction and in building trust with the participants. For this purpose, the present research followed and got approved by the guidelines of the Loughborough University Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee.

In terms of assuring an ethical research design, each one of the participants was treated individually and their personal consent for their participation in the research was asked. In the questionnaires, this was achieved through the cover letter, which informed the participant about the purpose of the research and the conditions for the use of the data provided. In terms of the focus groups, on the day of the discussion and before each group started, all participants had a chance to read a participants' information sheet, containing details about the research project, the intended use of the data and the participants' rights and responsibilities. After going through the information sheet and asking for any additional information/clarifications, all participants signed two informed consent forms (one to be retained by the participant and one returned to me) to validate their participation[14]. Apart from these formal ways of conducting research ethically, not including 'leading' questions in any of the research tools employed for data collection further aided towards conducting ethical research through avoiding response bias (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

Aside of the ethical guidelines followed, a reflective account of my positionality was necessary for designing and conducting research in an ethical way (Rose, 1997; Kusek & Smiley, 2014). According to Chavez (2008: 475), I could be described to hold a "partial insider" status, as I was sharing a few identity characteristics with my participants (e.g. speaking the Greek language, having studied Primary Education for my undergraduate degree etc.), but also had a degree of distance from the community (e.g. permanently living abroad since 2013, being a PhD researcher etc.). According to Banks (1998), I was an insider as I was a native Greek, socialised in the same national context with my participants, but also had an intellectual and cultural distance from them, as a postgraduate student and resident in the UK. Of course, the insider-outsider status in terms of positionality is not fixed (Naples, 1996; Chacko, 2004) and it can also be influenced by temporal and other contextual variables that make positionality fluid (Chavez, 2008; Kusek & Smiley, 2014; Savvides, Al-Youssef, Colin, & Garrido, 2014). As Labaree (2002) puts it, a researcher can experience various degrees of 'insiderness and outsiderness', based on how she/he is socioeconomically and culturally positioned in comparison to and by participants during the research process (Merriam et al., 2001), which affects various stages and aspects of the study (Valentine, 2002; Chacko, 2004;

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[14] For a copy of the participant information sheet and informed consent form, see Appendix D and E respectively.

Kusek & Smiley, 2014), from research design and fieldwork access to data collection and interpretation (Zempi, 2016). Kusek and Smiley (2014: 157) describe this situation as experiencing "positions of betweenness". In general, my insider positionality brought both advantages and complications throughout the different stages of my research, as I had to contend with multiple social identities to get along both with the gatekeepers (i.e. members of staff in charge of the teaching practice/Heads of Departments) and my participants (Chavez, 2008).

However, according to Ismail (2005), positionality is more than being an insider or outsider in relation to a research group. Most importantly, it is about having an insider's knowledge and experience of a place and thus being able to address the unique concerns of that place (ibid). My background as a native Greek and former Primary Education student were two important aspects that made me an 'insider' more than an outsider. To start with, this 'insider' positionality provided me with a significant advantage in terms of knowing how to negotiate my access to my desired fieldwork locations, due to my knowledge of navigating the various actors and power hierarchies in place, but also due to my Greek language competence. However, one could also argue that my outsider positionality enabled me in a way at times. For example, my status as a postgraduate research student from a foreign institution, provided me with immediate legitimacy in the field (Chavez, 2008) arising from my academic qualifications, making my relationship with gatekeepers easier to be established, as their acceptance to provide me with access to their students and institutions would be an opportunity for participation in a research project outside the national borders.

In terms of data collection and analysis, my insider positionality offered me with a nuanced perspective for observation and interpretation of data (Kusek & Smiley, 2014). I consider this more than a strength rather than a potential source of bias, as following Kusek and Smiley (2014: 159) I feel that my research is "stronger and more grounded" because of my attachments. My insider positionality also helped me to quickly establish rapport with the participants (Chavez, 2008; Kusek & Smiley, 2014). This was particularly beneficial for establishing trust and a 'safe' atmosphere for the focus group conduction (ibid). As no language barrier was present and I had a personal insight of the Greek reality and of a Primary Education undergraduate's student life, these elements gave me an advantage in terms of relating with and understanding my participants' experiences.

However, as I am now a PhD student, based abroad during the last five years, my participants perceived me as an 'insider-outsider', having some things in common with them but also not being part of their 'world'. This mainly arose from my socioeconomic status of a postgraduate researcher from the UK, which although attractive for the gatekeepers as described above, distanced me from the participants. As a consequence, some of the participants initially addressed me in the courtesy form, as a sign of respect towards my researcher capacity. However, after introducing myself at the beginning of each discussion, encouraging a friendly atmosphere for a fruitful discussion instead of a serious academic research environment and giving out my previous experience as a Primary Education student in Greece, participants gradually addressed me in a more intimate way, as they understood that we shared some common experiences (Kusek & Smiley, 2014), a process that was also assisted by the use of humour (Meyer, 2000).

Finally, my gender positionality also had some impact to the study (Kusek & Smiley, 2014). Specifically, one of the gatekeepers who was male was a bit overprotective with me, suggesting for example to accompany me to the research sites in which questionnaires would be distributed and focus groups would be conducted to make sure that I would be safe and nicely treated. His attitude felt at times patronising and I could interpret that based on some comments he made about my young age and my gender and how I should be careful about some 'troublemaker' students. He also asked to meet me in his office before the distribution of the questionnaires in his module, to make sure that he will accompany to the room in which the module was taking place, but also, as I found out on the spot, to go through my questionnaire. After a quick look, he pointed out at some 'grey areas' for him, suggesting how some questions' phrasing could be changed, based on his research methodology expertise. Similar behaviour has been noted before in the literature, even with male researchers, interpreted as a complication of an insider's positionality arising from common ethnic background (Kusow, 2003). However, in my case, I feel that this behaviour had to do with both my Greek descent, which made the gatekeeper think that his comment would be perceived as a friendly advice among co-nationals, but also with my age and gender, which clearly made the gatekeeper think that his status and power position allowed him to suggest corrections to my work. My gender played less out in the focus group discussions, as departments of Primary Education are female-dominated in terms of their population, so the two male participants involved in the focus groups discussions seemed to be at ease with me,

exhibiting no different behaviour or comments compared to the female focus group participants towards me.

4. Quantitative Findings

This chapter will present the findings of the questionnaire analysis. The first section will provide information on the sample's main descriptive characteristics. The next part will describe the relationships identified between the variables included in the statistical model trying to predict multicultural competence. A section reporting detailed findings of the path analysis, regarding the statistically significant causal relationships identified within the variables included in the statistical model, will conclude this chapter. The main findings of this chapter are the relatively high scores participants achieved on multicultural competence and its components and the identification of the main determinants of pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, namely attachment to national homogeneity, perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to teaching practicum, gender, political orientation, experiences of international mobility, multicultural encounters and attendance of diversity-related modules in ranked order from the most to the least influential.

4.1. Sample's Descriptive Characteristics

4.1.1. Control Variables[15]

A total of 356 questionnaires were collected. Out of them, 140 (39%) came from the Department of Education in Central Greece, 104 came from the one in Northern Greece whereas the remaining 112 came from the Department of Education in Southern Greece.

The sample comprised predominantly of women (87%), which reflects the overall student teacher population, a female-dominated field of studies (Petrović & Zlatković, 2009). Moreover, 96% of the participants reported Greece as their country of origin and only 10% came from a culturally diverse background, measured as having at least one non-Greek parent. This fact highlights the issue of an ethnically homogenous future teaching body, despite the multicultural classroom reality currently prevalent in Greece. The female-dominated, white, ethnically homogenous sample is consistent with what the literature in the Global North indicates about the teaching force, i.e., predominantly female and White (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Yang & Montgomery, 2010).

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[15] See Appendix G.1., Tables 1-5 for the tables presenting control variables' characteristics.

In terms of place of permanent residence, three quarters of the sample indicated a metropolitan/urban setting. Specifically, the majority of the participants (55%) listed a large city, with another 20% mentioning a metropolitan city. This distribution corresponds to the latest degree of urbanisation for Greece, according to which 80% of the Greek population resides in metropolitan cities and prefectural capitals (Laboratory of Demographic and Social Analysis of the University of Thessaly, 2016). As far as the respondents' familial socioeconomic background is concerned, in terms of occupational status, the mean score for both maternal and paternal occupation (*M= 44.38* and *M= 45.03* respectively) corresponds to clerical workers, with almost 30% of the mothers being housewives or unemployed. Level of education was reported as being roughly the same for both parents, as well, between graduating from upper high school and completing some sort of vocational training after high school (*M= 6.48, SD=2.83* and *M= 6.81, SD=2.59* for paternal and maternal educational level respectively). Familial income ranged predominantly between 10.001-30.000€ (*M= 2.28, SD= 1.08*). This finding seems to be representative of the general Greek population, with the most recent data available reporting the mean familial income in Greece being at 13.254€ (Tsiros, 2017). Regarding participants' university entrance grade, the mean score was 15.73/20 (*SD=1.53*), significantly lower than what Spinthourakis and her collaborators found with all students scoring over 17 (Spinthourakis et al., 2009). This difference can be explained by the decreasing popularity of Primary Education as a field of study with good graduate prospects due to the freeze of new teacher recruitments that followed from the austerity measures implemented since the beginning of the financial crisis and the declining salaries of teachers (OECD, 2017). Finally, as far as political orientation is concerned, participants indicated a middle stance with a slight inclination towards the left-wing of the political spectrum, with the mean score in this question being at 5.87 (*SD=1.52*).

4.1.2. Independent Variables

4.1.2.1. Multicultural Experiences and Encounters[16]

A primary analysis of the variables included in this category showed that participants scored quite high in indirect contact with diversity. More specifically, nearly half of the sample spoke two foreign languages, with the next most popular answer being one (34%). This

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[16] See Appendix G.2., Tables 1-6 for tables presenting the relevant variables' descriptive characteristics.

finding mirrors previous ones on a cross-national study with EU pre-service teachers from six different universities, in which 44% of the sample spoke two foreign languages and 40% spoke just one (Garrote Salazar & Fernández Agüero, 2016). More specifically, in the present study, roughly 99% of the sample spoke English. With quite a big difference, French came in second place (33%), followed by German (27%), Italian (13%) and Spanish (7%). This trend of foreign languages spoken keenly reflects the Greek reality, where English is studied as the first foreign language with French or German following as the second-foreign-language most popular choices (Dendrinos & Theodoropoulou, 2009). It is worth mentioning here that these three languages are introduced as part of the Greek educational curricula, with English being introduced in Year 1 and French or German in Year 5. Italian and Spanish form popular foreign language choices offered by private language centres (ibid). 4% of the sample spoke another language than the aforementioned ones (e.g. Albanian, Russian etc.). Due to the languages mentioned in this category, it is possible that these might be heritage languages spoken by participants with a culturally diverse background. Regarding foreign language proficiency, participants' mean score was a bit above 4 (*SD= 1.99*), on a possible range between 0 and 20, as 5 was the highest number of foreign languages spoken recorded among the sample. The best proficiency was recorded in English, with the mean score being at 2.75 (*SD= 0.88*), indicating good to very good command. This is logical as English forms the first foreign language studied by the vast majority of Greeks, as it is introduced in school in Year 1 and continued throughout secondary school but can also be studied in privately owned foreign language centres everywhere in Greece (ibid). For all other foreign languages reported, 'little command' was the most popular answer. These findings show that Greek pre-service teachers have more indirect multicultural experience, compared to their counterparts from English-speaking countries (e.g. Chang, Anagnostopoulos, & Omae, 2011 for the USA). This should theoretically put the former in an advantageous position compared to the latter in terms of direct multicultural experiences, as learning foreign languages is related to the development of cross-cultural communication (Davcheva, 2003).

Unfortunately, when reviewing the scores of the variables indicating direct multicultural experiences, the aforementioned expectation was not met. A third of the participants had no experience of travelling within Europe and 81% had no experience of travelling outside Europe. In general, participants reported having experience of travelling within Europe more than experiences of travelling outside. This difference was statistically significant (p = 0.000)

and could be explained by the easiness of travelling across European countries as Greece is an EU member. In general, experience of travelling abroad reported in the present study seems to be significantly lower compared to the one reported by Garrote Salazar and Fernández Agüero (2016) in their EU cross-national study, where 73.5% of the participants had been abroad. Along similar lines, only a mere 6.5% of the sample (23 participants) had experience of studying abroad. It is worth mentioning that out of those participants positively responding to the aforementioned question, one third had participated in a semester-long ERASMUS exchange program whereas another 29% were Greek Cypriots that had come to Greece to pursue their university studies. So, in general, experiences of travelling or studying abroad were minimal. This finding might be related to inadequate funds for traveling or studying abroad as an outcome of the financial crisis that Greece is experiencing since 2008. As Parkhouse et al. (2016) aptly mention, although travelling and studying abroad are beneficial for multicultural competence development, partaking in such international experiences is not logistically feasible for all. Thus, the fact that participants in the present sample appear to have limited direct multicultural experiences might be an indicator of financial hardship rather than a lack of interest in gaining first-hand multicultural experiences (Petrović & Zlatković, 2009).

Table 2: Multicultural Encounters: Item's Descriptive Characteristics

	None	**A few**	**Many**	**A lot**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Culturally Diverse Friends	26%	53.7%	15.8%	4.5%	1.99	0.77
Valid n= 354						

Regarding multicultural encounters, as presented in Table 2, participants reported minimal experiences of multicultural friendships, with the mean score being at 1.99 (*SD=0.77*), where 1 represented no culturally diverse friends and 4 represented a lot. Specifically, over a quarter of the sample reported having no culturally diverse friends while over half of the participants reported having just a few. In general, these findings corroborate previous ones, according to which pre-service teachers lack in meaningful first-hand multicultural encounters (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Milner, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Skepple, 2014).

4.1.2.2. Attachment to National Homogeneity

As presented in Table 3 below, participants' attachment to national homogeneity appeared to be moderate, with the responses' mean score being just above 3, within a possible range of 1 and 6. Responses clustered mainly in the middle of the scale provided, hinting an indecisive stance regarding participants' agreement with the relevant statements presenting no statistical significant difference between the answers of students from the different departments visited. Participants did not show a clear preference regarding whether or not it is better for a country if everyone shares the same language (*M=3.18, SD=1.39*), culture and traditions (*M=3.06, SD=1.55)* with the mean difference noticed here not being statistically significant. On the contrary, participants appeared more tolerant regarding the existence of various religions within a country (*M=4.01, SD= 1.33*), somewhat agreeing with the respective statement. Similarly, participants seemed to somewhat agree with the fact that minorities and immigrants enrich the country's culture (*M=4.19, SD=1.25).* The mean differences noted in these cases are statistically significant both between each other (p = 0.019) as well as in comparison to the mean scores of the two previous items (p = 0.000). These findings corroborate that, although participants seemed to be favourable to the contribution of minority and immigrant populations to Greece's culture, their responses still denoted the importance of a homogenous national core, understood predominantly as sharing the same language and culture, with religion following. All in all, participants seemed to have no clear standpoint regarding their preference for diversity or homogeneity within a country.

Table 3: Attachment to National Homogeneity Scale: Items' Descriptive Characteristics

	Mean	**Standard Deviation**
It's better for a country if almost everyone shares the same culture and traditions	3.06	1.55
It's better for a country if there are many religions	4.01	1.33
It's better for a country if almost everyone speaks the same language	3.18	1.39
Foreigners and minorities enrich a country's culture	4.19	1.25
Total mean score: 3.01 (*SD*=0.92)		
Valid n= 346		

4.1.2.3. Diversity-Related Modules Attended

As presented in Table 4 on the following page, when asked to state if they had attended any diversity-related module during their teaching studies, 71% of the sample responded that they

have attended at least one. On the contrary, 16% of the participants replied that they had not attended a relevant module and another 13% stated that they did not remember. Out of the participants positively responding to this question, the vast majority had attended just one module (57%) with the biggest number of modules attended reported being five (2%), as shown in Table 5.

Table 4: Attendance of Diversity-Related Modules throughout Teacher Training Studies

	Percentage
Yes	70.7%
No	16.1%
Don't Remember	13.2%
Valid n= 355	

Table 5: Number of Diversity-Related Modules Attended throughout Teacher Training Studies

	Percentage
One	56.6%
Two	18.9%
Three	17.4%
Four	5.6%
Five	1.6%
Valid n= 249	

The fact that the majority of participants had attended just one module grappling with diversity issues is quite alarming, especially bearing in mind that, within their four years of studies, participants have to complete a big number of modules towards the completion of their degree. Just to give a clearer idea, among the departments involved in the present study, pre-service teachers in the department of Central Greece have to complete 49 modules, 56 in Northern Greece and in Southern Greece, 62 modules or 59 plus an undergraduate thesis.

Looking a bit deeper into the modules provided, a total of 23 different course titles were mentioned across the three departments, as presented in Table 6 on the following page. Nine modules were reported by participants from the Department of Primary Education in Central Greece, six modules by the ones from Northern Greece and eleven by the ones from Southern Greece. 'Multicultural/Intercultural Education' was the only module found to be common between the three departments, with just another one being offered by two departments (i.e. 'Language Learning Strategies/Language Didactics' in Northern and Southern Greece). The

diversity in the modules offered corroborates the findings of previous studies, according to which there is a lack in the design of common axes in the multicultural curricula and modules offered by the various Departments of Education in Greece (Liakopoulou, 2006; Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013).

Table 6: Module Titles Reported by Department

Module Title	**Department in Central Greece**	**Department in Northern Greece**	**Department in Southern Greece**
Intercultural/Multicultural Education	X	X	X
Intercultural Education II	X		
Intercultural Theology	X		
Religious Education Teaching	X		
Religion and Culture	X		
Religion Education Issues	X		
Ethics and Education	X		
Sociology of Education	X		
Sociology of Education II	X		
Alternative Methods of Assessing Language Skills		X	
Introduction to Bilingualism-Bilingual Education		X	
Teaching Greek as a Second/Foreign Language		X	
Differentiated Teaching in Mixed Classrooms		X	
Language Learning Strategies/ Language Didactics		X	X
Education and Diversity: Multiculturalism and Intercultural Communication			X
Human Rights and Education			X
The Relationship between Language and Culture in Multicultural Societies			X
Roma Children Education			X
Intercultural Psychology			X
Special Issues in the Education of Foreign and Immigrant Students			X
Practical Placements in Social and Practical Institutions			X
Social and Educational Exclusion			X
Comparative Education			X

The mean score of diversity-related courses attended also varied significantly among the different departments (see Appendix G.2., Table 7). Specifically, participants from the department of Southern Greece seemed to have attended significantly more modules than their peers throughout their studies, whereas participants from the Northern Department had attended significantly less. According to Palaiologou and Dimitriadou (2013), the variety of diversity-related modules offered denotes the emphasis given be each department in a multicultural education orientation. Consequently, the statistically significant difference in the number of diversity-related modules attended between the departments in Central and Southern Greece and the department in Northern Greece could be translated as the former placing more emphasis in the preparation of multiculturally competent teachers compared to the latter.

Regarding course content elements, as presented in Table 7, nearly half of the sample reported that, among the options provided to them (i.e. written final exam, essay coursework, weekly coursework, oral presentations, teaching practice in schools, participation in an organization dealing with diversity issues, visits from people working in organizations dealing with diversity issues and visits from people with a culturally diverse background), there was only one element included in the modules they attended.

Table 7: Sum of Diverse Elements Included in Diversity-Related Courses Attended

	Percentage
One	48.5%
Two	27.6%
Three	16.7%
Four	5.4%
Five	1.3%
Seven	0.4%
Valid *n*= 297	

As shown in Table 8 on the following page, in most cases, that was the written final exam (320 times mentioned across all modules and all participants) with written coursework in the form of essay or report coming second with a great difference (120 total counts). Participation in diversity-related organisations and talks by culturally diverse guest speakers had the lowest frequency. As becomes clear, it seems that, unfortunately, multicultural teacher training lacks in practical implementation opportunities and multicultural perspectives and keeps on being assessed in traditional ways, like written exams and written

coursework (Seeberg & Minick, 2012). Regarding differences between departments, participants from Southern Greece seemed to have experienced significantly more diverse elements as part of their diversity-related courses attended compared to their counterparts (see Appendix G.2., Table 8). This could be interpreted as an attempt towards more alternative delivery and assessment methods in diversity-related modules expressed by that particular department.

Table 8: Total Counts of Diverse Elements Included in the Diversity-Related Modules Attended

Element	**Total Counts (among all participants and all modules)**
Written Final Exam	320
Term Paper	120
Written Work (e.g. Weekly Diary)	71
In-Class Presentations	102
School Teaching Practicum	11
Participation in Diversity-Related Organisations	3
Guest Speakers from Diversity-Related Organisations	7
Culturally-Diverse Guest Speakers	3

Finally, looking at the interdepartmental differences in the scores of the factor combining the modules attended with the diverse elements included in them, students from the department of Southern Greece scored significantly higher (see Appendix G.2., Table 9). This could be translated as an indicator that students from this department experience in general a richer diversity-related curriculum.

4.1.2.4. Teaching Practicum

Participants seemed to be neither satisfied nor dissatisfied in terms of the relevance of multicultural education implementation to their teaching practice experience, with the mean score of the scale being at 3.26 (SD=1.00), on a possible range between 1 and 6. Comparing the scores reported across the three departments showed that the only statistically significant difference in the scale's mean score was that students from the department of Northern Greece score lower compared to their counterparts from Central Greece (see Appendix G.2., Table 10). Combined with the fact that the former department presented the smallest number of diversity-related modules reported, this could be translated as an indicator that the message

communicated by the curriculum of studies to the students of this department was that diversity-related training does not form an integral part of teacher preparation.

Table 9: Perceived Relevance of Multicultural Education Implementation to Teaching Practicum Scale: Items' Descriptive Characteristics

	Mean	**Standard Deviation**
Used Multicultural Education during Teaching Practicum	3.34	1.42
Leading Teacher Role Model for Multicultural Education Implementation	2.88	1.36
Supervisor of Teaching Practice Encouraged Multicultural Education Implementation	3.35	1.60
Teaching Practicum Assessment Based on the Implementation of Multicultural Education	2.09	1.24
Diversity as a Distinctive Characteristic of the Teaching Practicum Classroom Settings	2.82	1.40
Teaching Practicum Helped in Practical Implementation of Theoretical Knowledge of Multicultural Education	3.58	1.39
Teaching Practicum Helped Me Understand the Value of Multicultural Education for Contemporary Classrooms	3.62	1.35
Teaching Practicum Boosted My Confidence Concerning Ability to Practically Implement Multicultural Education	3.72	1.37
Teaching Practicum Had a Positive Effect on My Opinion of the Value of Multiculturalism in Contemporary Classrooms	3.91	1.31
Total mean score: 3.26 (*SD*=1.00)		
Valid n= 344		

Looking at the scales' individual items as delineated in Table 9 above, participants' best scores were noted in the items asking if the teaching practicum had a positive effect on their opinion regarding the value of multiculturalism in contemporary classrooms (*M=3.91, SD=1.31*) and on their confidence in their ability to implement multicultural education (*M=3.72, SD=1.37*). These two items were rated differently in a statistically significant way compared to the rest of the items included in this scale. However, when asked if the practicum helped in practically implementing what they had previously learnt on a theoretical level or if they actually used multicultural education during their placements, participants scored a bit lower. This ties with the low rate given to the encouragement provided by the teaching practicum supervisors for implementing multicultural education, as the two items were rated equally low, in a similar (i.e. statistically not significantly different) way. Most

importantly though, the low level of using multicultural education in classroom could be explained by the very low, in a statistically significant way, rated item, asking if multicultural education implementation formed an assessment axis for the teaching practicum (*M=2.09, SD=1.24*). Both the supervisors' low encouragement and the absence of multicultural education implementation as an assessment criterion denote that the hidden curricula of the teaching preparation downgrade the value, importance and relevance of multicultural education for the teaching profession. The very low, similar ratings given to leading teachers as role models for multicultural education implementation (*M=2.88, SD=1.36*) and the fact that participants disagree that diversity was a distinctive characteristic of their teaching classroom settings (*M=2.82, SD=1.40*) indicate that the same message is communicated by the classrooms' hidden curricula. In general, diversity-related teaching seemed to be a marginal part of the teaching practice experience that the sample's participants had, with hardly any emphasis placed upon the implementation of multicultural education (Kourti & Androussou, 2013).

4.1.3. Dependent Variable (Multicultural Competence)

Participants' average scores in each subscale all indicated moderately high multicultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. Participants' scored best in multicultural attitudes (*M=3.89, SD=0.44*), followed by multicultural teaching skills (*M=3.78, SD=0.64*) with multicultural teaching knowledge being last (*M=3.58, SD=0.69*)[17]. It is worth mentioning here that score differences between the subscales were statistically significant (p = 0.000). Between-group comparisons revealed no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of overall multicultural competence and multicultural attitudes across the three different departments. However, statistically significant differences were found in Multicultural Teaching Knowledge and Multicultural Teaching Skills sub-scale scores. More specifically, participants from the Department of Primary Education in Central Greece scored significantly lower than their counterparts from the Southern Department in Multicultural Teaching Knowledge and significantly lower than their Northern counterparts in Multicultural Teaching Skills.[18]

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[17] The scores for MTK and MTS reported here are weighed to reflect TMAS's 5-point value system so that they could ultimately be compared to the findings of Fu et al. (2017).

[18] See Appendix G.3., Table 1

The trend identified in the present study's findings regarding participants' score in each multicultural competence subscale reflects the pattern identified by Fu and her collaborators (2017) in the USA, who used the exact same three scales to measure pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. However, although the pattern is the same, participants of the present study scored lower in each subscale compared to their American counterparts ($M= 3.58<3.77$ for Knowledge, $M= 3.78<4.04$ for Skills and $M= 3.89<4.29$ for attitudes). So, despite being seemingly high in general, Greek pre-service teachers' level of multicultural competence was found to be lower compared to that of their counterparts from the United States, although the sample of the study of Fu et al. (2017) was significantly smaller (n=28), thus making the scores reported there more vulnerable to sample particularities. Despite sampling incompatibilities, this difference might be a good indicator that multicultural competence is both person-specific (Banks, 1994) and context-dependent (Portera, 2014: 164; Deardorff, 2009) or, in other words, develops to different extents among pre-service teachers in different countries and educational settings (Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014). All in all, the participants score differences should be read taking into account the differences in experiences of multiculturalism and multicultural teacher training between the American and the Greek context, with the former being a society with long multicultural history and the latter being an emergent multicultural context.

Breaking down the multicultural competence factor to its components provided richer insights to participants' scores in the individual items included in each subscale (i.e. Multicultural Teaching Knowledge, Multicultural Teaching Attitudes and Multicultural Teaching Skills). Participants seemed to agree with most of the statements of the Multicultural Teaching Knowledge (MTK) scale. Table 10 on the following page provides a general overview of the individual items' scores. Participants scored highest on the item regarding a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy ($M= 3.91, SD=0.85$) and this varied statistically significantly from the way the participants rated the rest of the items in the scale. The item asking participants to rate how knowledgeable they are about particular teaching strategies that affirm ethno-racial identities of all students was marked in a statistically significant different way compared to the rest of the statements included in the scale. Items 3, 4 and 5 of the table were rated in a similar way to each other, but differed significantly from the rest of the ratings. Generally, participants scored higher on the items regarding theoretical knowledge and a bit lower on items related to knowledge of teaching

strategies that encourage the equal participation of all students. This could be interpreted as a sign that participants feel more comfortable with concept-related knowledge, but they lack in knowledge related to practical enactment of multicultural education practices (Spinthourakis, 2010). The lowest score on this sub-scale, which was statistically significant compared to the rest of the variables, was reported on the item asking participant to indicate their knowledge of community resources available in the area in which they were teaching (*M= 3.08, SD=1.08)*. This might be an indicator of the disconnection between teacher training departments and the local community within which these are based, which results in community resources and knowledge not being utilised in teaching and learning.

Table 10: Multicultural Teaching Knowledge Scale: Items' Descriptive Characteristics

Item	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
I Am Knowledgeable about Particular Teaching Strategies that Affirm the Racial and Ethnic Identities of All Students	3.51	0.98
I Have a Clear Understanding of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	3.91	0.85
I Am Knowledgeable about Racial and Ethnic Identity Theories	3.62	0.94
I Am Knowledgeable of How Historical Experiences of Various Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups May Affect Students' Learning	3.69	0.88
I Understand the Various Communication Styles among Different Racial and Ethnic Minority Students in My Classroom	3.71	0.92
I Am Knowledgeable about the Various Community Resources within the City I Teach	3.08	1.08
Total mean score: 3.58 (*SD*=0.69)		
Valid n= 339		

Regarding the Teachers' Multicultural Attitudes Survey (TMAS), participants seemed to score quite high, especially compared to their scores in multicultural teaching knowledge and skills. The overall mean score of TMAS achieved was higher compared to the one scored by senior pre-service teachers in Europe (Polat & Ogay Barka, 2012 mention a mean score of 3.81 for Swiss and 3.45 for Turkish students) but lower compared to that of American counterparts (Bodur, 2012 with *M=4.10, SD=0.40*). This might be another indicator of the importance of context for multicultural competence acquisition. Specifically, multicultural teacher training has a long history in America and, in general, the programs of studies offered there have a specific focus on cultivating multicultural attitudes among pre-service teachers

(e.g. Fu et al., 2017). On the contrary, European countries like Switzerland, Turkey and Greece with less experience in teacher training for diversity seem to still be trying to catch up on that domain.

Table 11: Teachers' Multicultural Attitudes Survey: Items' Descriptive Characteristics

Item	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
I Find Teaching a Culturally Diverse Group Rewarding	3.87	0.79
Teaching Methods Need to Be Adopted to Meet the Needs of a Culturally Diverse Student Group	4.30	0.72
Sometimes I Think That There Is Too Much Emphasis Placed on Multicultural Awareness and Training for Teachers	2.64	1.11
Teachers Have the Responsibility to Be Aware of Their Students' Cultural Backgrounds	4.38	0.77
I frequently Invite Extended Family Members to Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences	2.97	1.08
It Is Not the Teacher's Responsibility to Encourage Pride in One's Culture	2.33	1.21
As Classrooms Become More Culturally Diverse, the Teacher's Job Becomes Increasingly Challenging	4.22	0.69
I Believe that the Teacher's Role Needs to Be Redefined to Address the Needs of Students from Culturally Diverse Backgrounds	4.22	0.75
When Dealing with Bilingual Children, Communication Styles Are Often Interpreted as Behavioural Problems	2.84	1.18
As Classrooms Become More Culturally Diverse, the Teacher's Job Becomes Increasingly Rewarding	3.54	0.92
I Can Learn a Great Deal from Students with Culturally Different Backgrounds	4.24	0.72
Multicultural Training for Teachers is Not Necessary	1.69	0.94
To Be an Effective Teacher, One Needs to Be Aware of Cultural Differences Present in the Classroom	4.30	0.71
Multicultural Awareness Training Can Help Me to Work More Effectively with a Diverse Student Population	4.26	0.70
Students Should Learn to Communicate in Greek Only	2.27	1.13
Today's Curriculum Gives Undue Importance to Multiculturalism and Diversity	2.57	1.02
I Am Aware of the Diversity in Cultural Backgrounds in My Classroom	3.86	0.89
Regardless of the Makeup of My Class, It Is Important for Students to Be Aware of Multicultural Diversity	4.30	0.73
Being Multiculturally Aware Is Not Relevant for the Subject I Teach	1.88	1.03
Teaching Students about Cultural Diversity Will Only Create Conflict in the Classroom	2.02	1.08
Total mean score: 3.89 (*SD*=0.44)		
Valid n= 318		

Table 11 in the previous page provides detailed descriptive characteristics for the items included in TMAS. Having a closer look at these, participants scored very high in items related to the importance of being responsive to the diversity present in today's classrooms. What is even more encouraging is that students scored very high on the items highlighting culturally diverse students as a source of enrichment (*M=4.24, SD=0.72*). They also recognised the importance of educators being multiculturally aware independent of the subject they teach (with item 19 being rated in a statistically significant different way compared to the rest of the items included in the scale) and of raising multicultural awareness regardless of the class cultural make-up (*M=4.30, SD=0.73*). It is worth mentioning though that the increasingly diverse in terms of culture classroom environments were considered more challenging (*M=4.22, SD=0.69*) than rewarding (*M=3.54, SD=0.92*), with the difference noted in these scores being statistically significant.

Participants agreed that multicultural classrooms bring responsibilities for educators, like knowing the students' background and adjusting the teaching style so as to be responsive to the needs of all students, with these items being rated in a similar way (i.e. not statistically significant different). However, on the item asking them to rate how well they know the diversity present in their classrooms in terms of their students' background, participants' score was statistically significantly lower (*M=3.86, SD=0.89*). This might be due to the fact that pre-service teachers do not get to know their students well as they are only present in the teaching practicum classroom for a limited amount of time. However, it could also hint that the leading teachers do not fill them in adequately in relation to the student background characteristics. Findings also showed that pre-service teachers believed in the benefits of multicultural teacher training, as they saw the latter as necessary and important for their improvement in successfully addressing multicultural classrooms (*M=4.26, SD=0.70*). Finally, bilingualism seemed a topic that participants' attitudes were relatively less strong and settled upon. Specifically, participants seemed unaware of the fact that bilingual students run the risk of being classified as having specific learning difficulties due to their language communication style (*M*=2.84, *SD*=1.18) and, although they disagreed with imposing communication only in Greek to them, they did not do so strongly (*M*=2.27, *SD*=1.13).

Table 12 on the following page shows the individual scores of the MTS items. One of participants' highest scores was recorded in setting themselves as role models in terms of promoting diversity (*M*=4.43, *SD*=0.75), with the item's rating being statistically significant

different to all the other ratings given to items of this scale. Some other highly-marked items referred to establishing strong relationships with the families of culturally diverse students and adjusting elements in the general school environment so that ethno-racially diverse students will have equal opportunities. These two items were rated in a similar way to each other but differed significantly from the way the rest of the items were marked. In general, participants appeared to be quite skilful in adjusting their teaching to be culturally responsive. However, their answers indicated that they were better at reviewing existing educational materials for ethnic and racial bias (with the item's rating differing in a statistically significant way from all the other ratings given to this scale), rather than creating ideas and practices to promote social justice from scratch. It is indicative that the items presenting the lowest score in this scale were the ones mentioning the inclusion of activities for celebrating cultural diversity in the classroom (*M=3.*59, *SD=0.98*) and the inclusion of multicultural examples and perspectives in the learning materials used (*M*=3.59, *SD*=0.95).

Table 12: Multicultural Teaching Skills Scale: Items' Descriptive Characteristics

Item	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
I integrate Cultural Values and Lifestyles of Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups in My Teaching	3.70	0.88
I plan Many Activities to Celebrate Diverse Cultural Practices in My Classroom	3.59	0.98
I plan School Events to Increase Students' Knowledge about Cultural Experiences of Various Racial and Ethnic Groups	3.63	0.99
My Curricula Integrate Topics and Events from Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations	3.63	0.94
I Make Changes within the General School Environment so that Racial and Ethnic Minority Students Will Have an Equal Opportunity for Success	3.86	1.03
I Consult Regularly with Other Teachers or Administrators to Help Me Understand Multicultural Issues Related to Instruction	3.62	1.06
I Rarely Examine the Instructional Materials I use in the Classroom for Racial and Ethnic Bias	2.04	1.15
I Often Include Examples of the Experiences and Perspectives of Racial and Ethnic Groups during my Classroom Lessons	3.59	0.95
I Often Promote Diversity by the Behaviours I Exhibit	4.43	0.75
I Establish Strong, Supportive Relationships with Racial and Ethnic Minority Parents	3.94	0.91
Total mean score: 3.78 (*SD*=0.64)		
Valid n= 337		

4.2. Variable Relationships

The next step of the analysis was to identify the relationship between each one of the variables described in the former section. For this purpose, a bivariate correlation analysis was run. According to Wuensch (2015: 10), bivariate correlation is used so as to “measure the linear association between two variables without establishing any cause-effect relationship”.

The relevant correlation matrix, presented in Table 13 on the following page, showed that gender, political orientation, direct multicultural experiences and encounters, attachment to national homogeneity, diversity-related courses attended and perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to the teaching practice experience appeared to be related to multicultural competence. Among them, all associations identified were relatively weak apart from the one between attachment to national homogeneity and multicultural competence which was medium (r = -0.351, $p < 0.01$). Consequently, it became clear that there was a negative relationship between attachment to national homogeneity and multicultural competence standing out among all the other associations established.

Table 13: Correlation Matrix

		MULCOMP	PERINCLDIV TEACHPR	DIVCOURATT	ATTNATHOM	MULTENC	DIR_ MULEXP	INDIR_ MULEXP	POLOR	UEG	ETHN	SES	PoR	GENDER
MULCOMP	Pearson Correlation	1												
	Sig. (2-tailed)													
	N	299												
PERINCLDIVTEACHPR	Pearson Correlation	**.282****	1											
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000												
	N	289	344											
DIVCOURATT	Pearson Correlation	**.261****	.042	1										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.483											
	N	246	286	297										
ATTNATHOM	Pearson Correlation	**-.351****	-.099	**-.166***	1									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.070	.005										
	N	296	335	288	346									
MULTENC	Pearson Correlation	**.241****	**.268****	**.218****	**-.248****	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000									
	N	297	342	296	344	354								
DIR_MULEXP	Pearson Correlation	**.122***	.062	-.006	-.020	**.195****	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.262	.917	.718	.000								
	N	284	329	284	329	338	339							
INDIR_MULEXP	Pearson Correlation	.082	.025	**.184****	-.101	**.221****	**.172****	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.159	.646	.002	.062	.000	.002							
	N	294	338	291	340	349	336	350						
POLOR	Pearson Correlation	**.170****	.080	.050	**-.393****	**.153****	.010	.086	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.150	.404	.000	.005	.854	.117						
	N	283	327	284	330	336	321	332	338					
UEG	Pearson Correlation	-.114	-.041	**.160****	-.018	.027	.040	**.167****	-.066	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.052	.451	.006	.742	.617	.468	.002	.233					
	N	291	334	291	335	342	327	338	329	344				
ETHN	Pearson Correlation	-.009	-.039	.013	.023	.040	**.423****	.101	.024	.054	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.873	.476	.825	.676	.460	.000	.063	.663	.327				
	N	289	333	290	335	343	329	339	330	335	345			
SES	Pearson Correlation	.054	-.085	.120	**-.191****	.091	**.225****	**.119***	.092	.082	.045	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.413	.160	.063	.001	.125	.000	.048	.131	.171	.461			
	N	234	276	240	275	283	271	280	271	278	275	284		
PoR	Pearson Correlation	-.043	-.021	.020	.000	.056	**.128***	**.134***	-.010	.083	.053	**.203****	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.467	.708	.730	.993	.304	.020	.013	.859	.126	.334	.001		
	N	289	333	291	335	343	328	339	329	337	336	282	345	
GENDER	Pearson Correlation	**.219****	.043	.102	.003	.038	.029	-.030	.053	.030	.016	.051	-.009	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.429	.079	.959	.479	.599	.575	.332	.579	.766	.395	.861	
	N	298	343	297	345	353	338	349	338	344	345	284	345	355

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

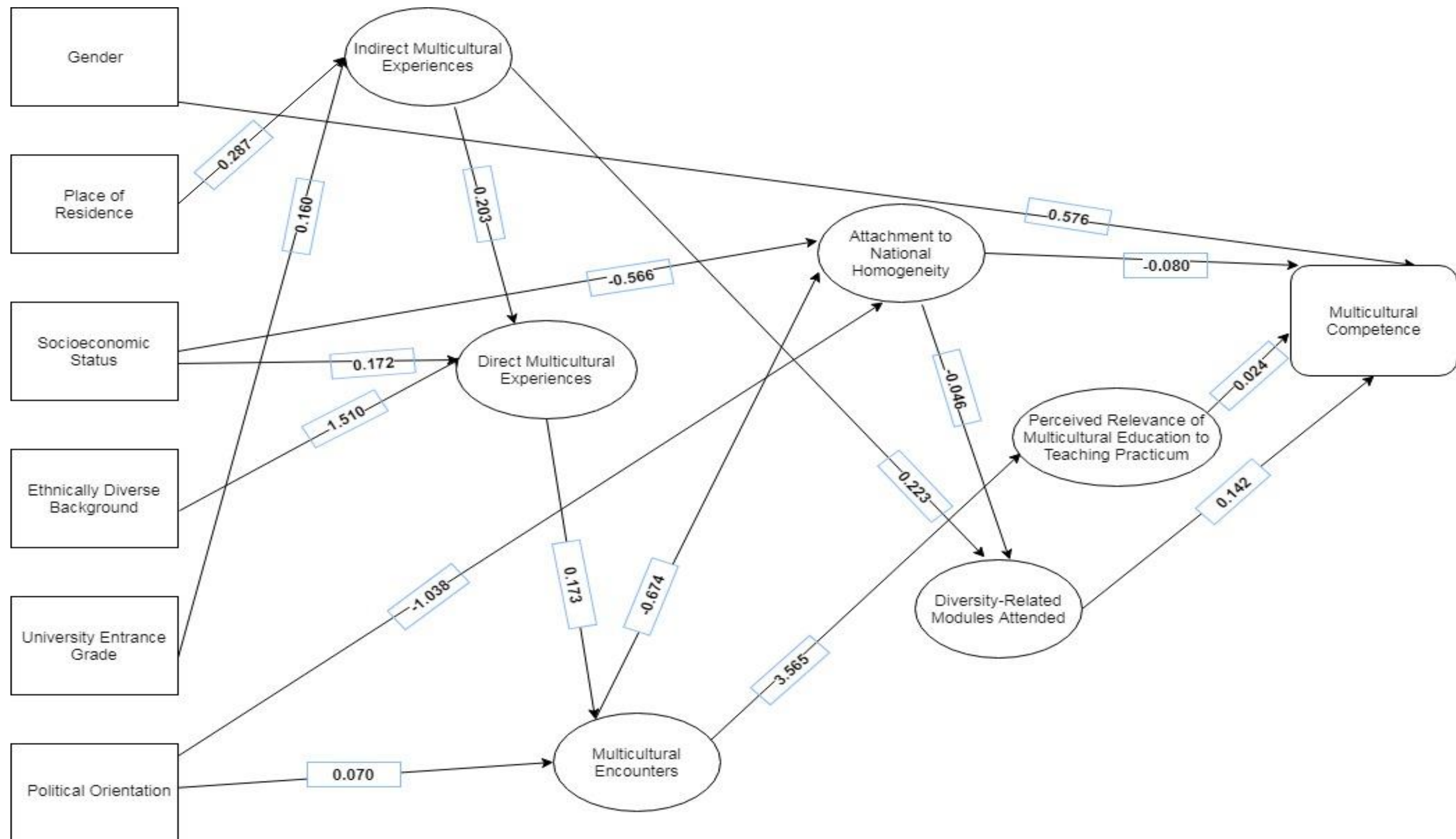
Regarding the variables found to not be associated with multicultural competence (i.e. ethnicity, place of residence, socioeconomic status, university entrance grade and indirect multicultural experiences), they all appeared to have statistically significant relationships with other variables correlated to multicultural competence. Just to give an example, indirect multicultural experiences, although presenting no correlation with multicultural competence, were positively related with direct multicultural experiences (r = 0.172, $p < 0.01$), multicultural encounters (r = 0.221, $p < 0.01$) and diversity-related courses attended (r = 0.184, $p < 0.01$). Thus, since between ethnicity, place of residence, socioeconomic status, university entrance grade and indirect multicultural experiences, each one of them was found to be related with at least one of the variables that were found to be correlated with multicultural competence, none of these variables were eliminated from the model trying to explain multicultural competence, since they could influence multicultural competence indirectly, through affecting other variables correlated to it.

4.3. Multicultural Competence Model

The correlation matrix presented and delineated in the previous section can only provide information about the strength and type of the relationship between variables. Consequently, correlations are not adequate by themselves to answer the present study's hypotheses about the effect of socio-demographic characteristics, multicultural experiences and encounters, attachment to national homogeneity and diversity-related training received during university studies on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. For this purpose, path analysis was deemed the most appropriate strategy, as it can inform the researcher as to whether the hypothesised model fits the pattern of correlations found between the dataset (Lleras, 2005: 25; Streiner, 2005: 121). More specifically, a series of structured equations were run to check for the effect that each one of the independent variables included in the model had on its subsequent independent variables as well as on the dependent variable. Figure 2 on the following page presents the statistically significant paths identified in the model[19].

[19] A figure representing the path model using standardised path coefficients is available in Appendix G.5. (Figure 4).

Figure 2: The Path Model Including Only the Statistically Significant Effects of the Variables Using Unstandardised Path Coefficients



On each arrow presented in Figure 2 on the previous page, there is an unstandardised path coefficient, "indicating the direction and magnitude of the causal relation between the relevant variables" (Hancock & Mueller, 2003: 803). The numbers on the arrows represent the direct effect (i.e. path coefficient) of each variable. Each path coefficient indicates the change in the dependent variable caused by a unit change in the independent (Falkenberg, 2014).

Table 14: The Regression Coefficients Estimating the Standardised Path Coefficients

	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	Direct Multicultural Experiences	Multicultural Encounters	Attachment to National Homogeneity	Diversity-Related Courses Attended	Perceived Relevance of Multicultural Education to Teaching Practicum	Multicultural Competence
Gender	-0.021	0.064	-0.024	0.091	0.037	0.017	**0.177***
Ethnically Diverse Background	0.101	**0.457*****	-0.067	-0.024	0.049	-0.075	-0.082
Place of Residence	**0.125***	0.040	0.085	-0.002	-0.055	-0.014	-0.060
Socioeconomic Status	0.068	**0.167****	0.045	**-0.147***	0.100	-0.089	-0.018
University Entrance Grade	**0.236*****	-0.068	0.085	-0.037	0.124	-0.018	-0.120
Political Orientation	0.114	-0.020	**0.142***	**-0.428*****	-0.085	-0.013	0.026
Indirect Multicultural Experiences	-	**0.218*****	0.065	0.019	**0.218****	-0.046	0.091
Direct Multicultural Experiences	-	-	**0.226****	-0.036	-0.148	0.014	0.144
Multicultural Encounters	-	-	-	**-0.141***	0.128	**0.291*****	0.064
Attachment to National Homogeneity	-	-	-	-	**-0.163***	-0.131	**-0.294*****
Diversity-Related Courses Attended	-	-	-	-	**-**	0.084	**0.147***
Perceived Relevance of Multicultural Education to Teaching Practicum	-	-	-	-	-	-	**0.234*****

*p ≤0.05, **p ≤0.01, ***p ≤0.001

Table 14 presents the sum of the regression coefficients estimating the corresponding path coefficients. Since a variety of measures were used to measure each variable, standardised

path coefficients were chosen to be depicted to assist in comparisons (Grace & Bollen, 2005), as they express the effects in terms of standard deviations. The highlighted numbers indicate statistically significant effects. As presented in both Figure 2 and Table 14 above, some of the variables included in the model were found to have a statistically significant direct effect on multicultural competence. However, as mentioned previously, path analysis does not only provide information about direct effects but also about the variables' total effects. As Bollen (1987: 38) explains, total effects "consist of all paths from one variable to another mediated by at least one additional variable". Total effects were estimated through the use of reduced form equations (Alwin & Hauser, 1975), a process described in detail previously, in section 3.1.

The final results concerning the direct and total effect of each independent variable on multicultural competence identified in the present study's model are presented in Table 15 on the following page[20]. The statistically significant effects are highlighted. To assist with the findings' interpretation, on the one hand, the direct effect of each variable shows the amount of change caused in the dependent variable by a unit change in the independent, if *all the other variables included in the model* are kept constant. The total effect of each variable on the other hand, estimates the amount of change in the dependent variable caused by a unit change in the independent, if *all the precedent variables of the independent one* are kept constant. If someone is interested in the indirect effects, these are the differences between total and direct effects and are statistically significant only when the respective total effects are statistically significant too. In total, the model produced was statistically significant in predicting multicultural competence and the predictors included in it accounted for 33.6% of the observed variance in the dependent variable. When adjusted for sample size and number of predictors, the variance explained dropped to a bit over 28%. In any case, the amount of variance explained by the present model is higher compared to previous relevant attempts to explain pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, like the one made by Cui (2016). The remaining subsections of this chapter will present detailed findings about the statistically significant effects identified.

[20] The SPSS outputs for both the direct and the total effects can be found in Appendix G.5.1. and G.5.2.

Table 15: Direct and Total Effects of the Independent Variables on Multicultural Competence

	Direct		Total	
	Unstandardised	Standardised	Unstandardised	Standardised
Gender	**0.516***	**0.177***	**0.576****	**0.204****
Ethnically Diverse Background	-0.216	-0.082	0.178	0.052
Place of Residence	-0.186	-0.060	-0.066	-0.029
SES	-0.019	-0.018	0.015	0.014
University Entrance Grade	-0.080	-0.120	-0.051	-0.076
Political Orientation	0.018	0.026	**0.135****	**0.199****
Indirect Multicultural Experiences	0.092	0.091	0.091	0.093
Direct Multicultural Experiences	0.152	0.144	**0.203****	**0.189****
Multicultural Encounters	0.088	0.064	**0.253****	**0.180****
Attachment to National Homogeneity	**-0.080*****	**-0.294*****	**-0.089*****	**-0.313*****
Diversity-Related Courses Attended	**0.148***	**0.147***	**0.163***	**0.162***
Perceived Relevance of Multicultural Education to Teaching Practicum	**0.026*****	**0.234*****	**0.026*****	**0.234*****

*p ≤0.05, **p ≤0.01, ***p ≤0.001

4.3.1. Background Personal Characteristics (Control Variables)

The model produced showed that gender and political orientation had a statistically significant effect on multicultural competence. On the contrary, place of residence, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and university entrance grade seemed to have no effect on the dependent variable.

In contrast to a body of literature showing that gender plays no role in multicultural competence or its aspects' development (Cui, 2016; Nadelson et al., 2012; Garrote Salazar & Fernández Agüero, 2016; Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014), women scored significantly higher than men on multicultural competence in the present study. Gender's direct effect translates into female participants scoring around half a unit higher in multicultural competence compared to their male counterparts (*b*= 0.516). Regarding the total effect of gender, female participants were found to score almost 0.6 units higher than males, if the rest of the control variables were kept constant. Previous studies have also identified a gender effect on multicultural competence (Tompkins et al., 2017; Pope, & Mueller, 2005) or its aspects (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Pettus & Allain, 1999; Turner, 2007; Petrović & Zlatković, 2009). So, female participants scored higher than their male counterparts, suggesting that the former might be

more competent to effectively address multicultural classrooms. This finding might be related to women's heightened awareness around issues of discrimination stemming from sociocultural identities (Constantine, 2000; Pope & Mueller, 2005). That means women might be more competent to address cultural diversity due to their awareness and experience of gender discrimination (Pope & Mueller, 2005; Constantine & Gloria, 1999). Backed up by previous research showing that male pre-service teachers seem to endorse a more insular stance towards issues pertaining to diversity and multiculturalism (Fehr & Agnello, 2012; Petrović & Zlatković, 2009; Salisbury, An, & Pascarella, 2013) and score lower in beliefs towards diversity in both personal and professional contexts compared to their female counterparts (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001), this finding might indicate that special attention needs to be payed to encourage and enhance diversity-friendly attitudes and multicultural skills among male pre-service teachers.

Political orientation was also found to affect multicultural competence, although not directly. The effect of political orientation was transmitted to multicultural competence through indirect multicultural experiences and attachment to national homogeneity. Specifically, as political orientation moved to the left-wing, participants were found to engage more with foreign languages and score lower on attachment to national homogeneity, which in turn predicted higher multicultural competence. Keeping the rest of the personal background characteristics constant, for every unit change to the left of the political orientation scale, participants scored 0.135 units higher in multicultural competence. This finding seems to offer empirical support on the observation made by Hollins and Guzman (2005), regarding the influence of political ideologies on pre-service teachers' perspectives on diversity issues. It goes in accordance with the findings of Nadelson et al. (2012) showing that more liberal political orientation indicates more multiculturally-friendly attitudes and particularly matches the findings of Anderson et al. (1997), who argued that those identifying with conservative political ideologies favour assimilation and resist multicultural education.

Regarding the effect of the rest of the personal sociodemographic variables, place of residence had an effect only on indirect multicultural experiences. More specifically, results showed that participants living in large/metropolitan cities had better foreign language competence than their counterparts residing in small towns or villages. This could be explained by the fact that foreign language centres are abundant in large and metropolitan cities whereas they can be scarce in small towns and villages. Consequently, inhabitants of

the latter might face difficulties in enhancing their foreign language capacities beyond what is offered on a school level as part of the national educational curriculum.

Socio-economic background affected direct multicultural experiences and attachment to national homogeneity. This relationship translated into participants coming from a higher familial socio-economic status having more experience of traveling abroad and showing lower attachment to national homogeneity. This finding supports the argument previously made according to which travelling and studying abroad are not necessarily indicators of personal interests and preferences but of financial possibilities (Parkhouse et al., 2016; Petrović & Zlatković, 2009). In other words, this finding indicates how socioeconomic background can be considered as a "fixed structure" that enables (or restricts) mobilities experiences (Waters, 2017: 285). In general, the relational network between socioeconomic status, direct multicultural experiences and attachment to national homogeneity backs up previous findings according to which individuals from a wealthier and higher educated background are more mobile, endorse cosmopolitan attitudes and show openness and curiosity for other cultures (Aba, 2016).

Having an ethnically diverse background was found to be linked with more travelling abroad experiences. This finding aligns with previous ones supporting that individuals with a migrant background are usually transnationally mobile in order to retain family ties (Vetrovec, 2009) and are also likely to have studied abroad in their or their parents' country of origin.

Finally, higher university entrance grade was found to indicate an increase in indirect multicultural experiences as well as in the number of diversity-related courses attended. The latter might have to do with the fact that the department requiring the lowest entrance grade (i.e. Northern Greece), was also the one in which the majority of the participants reported having attended no diversity-related modules.

In general, these findings allowed me to confirm my initial hypotheses that women and participants with more liberal political views will score higher in multicultural competence. However, no other of my initial hypotheses regarding the effect of personal background characteristics could be confirmed since place of residence, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and university entrance grade were found to exert no effect on multicultural competence.

4.3.2. Independent Variables

4.3.2.1. Multicultural Experiences and Encounters

Speaking and being proficient in foreign languages (i.e. indirect multicultural experiences) seemed to have no effect on multicultural competence. This contradicts previous findings from the USA (Crowne, 2008; Cui, 2016; Erwin & Coleman, 1998) but comes in accordance with the European cross-national study findings of Garrote Salazar and Fernández Agüero (2016). This context-dependent difference in the effect of indirect multicultural experiences to multicultural competence might be due to the fact that speaking foreign languages is a rarer trait among pre-service teachers (Chang et al., 2011) and thus more influential in the USA than it is for their counterparts from European countries. So, indirect multicultural experiences were insignificant for multicultural competence development, at least for the present study. However, higher levels of indirect multicultural experiences indicated more frequent travels abroad and attendance of more and richer-in-content diversity-related courses. This finding seems to indicate that indirect multicultural experiences (i.e. being competent at and speaking foreign languages) encourage direct multicultural experiences (Davcheva, 2003) as well as further engagement with diversity (Aba, 2016), expressed here through increased attendance of diversity-related courses with a variety of elements facilitating diversity learning.

Unlike the statistically insignificant effect of speaking foreign languages, direct multicultural experiences were found to be beneficial for multicultural competence. Consequently, as Seidl et al. (2016) argued, it seems that direct multicultural experiences are much more powerful and effective than indirect ones for multicultural competence development. The effect of direct multicultural experiences was fully mediated by heightened multicultural encounters. This is why the variable presents no statistically significant direct effect but only a total one. So, experience of travelling/studying abroad increased multicultural friendships and through the latter, multicultural competence. To be more specific, a unit increase in direct multicultural experiences made the score of multicultural competence increase by 0.203 units, if all the precedent variables were kept constant. This finding contradicts Garrote Salazar and Fernández Agüero (2016) as well as Tompkins et al. (2017), who found no effect between having experience of staying abroad and multicultural competence, probably because they did not take into consideration the mediating factor of increased multicultural encounters in their analysis. On the contrary, the present study's finding goes along with the

argument that first-hand multicultural experiences have a great influence on multicultural competence development (Stebleton et al., 2013; Alred et al., 2003; Roberts, 2003). This causal effect between direct multicultural experiences and multicultural competence is a proof of the importance of taking mobilities into consideration when examining learning experiences (Waters, 2017) and particularly multicultural ones. Combined with the fact that only a minority of the participants reported having studied or travelled abroad, this finding has implications for the role that the university could play in encouraging and enabling participation in relevant experiences.

Meaningful multicultural encounters measured as multicultural friendships were also found to be a significant predictor of multicultural competence. Although their effect was mediated through lower attachment to national homogeneity and heightened perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to the teaching practicum, they nonetheless influenced multicultural competence positively and significantly. More specifically, a unit increase in multicultural encounters would result in a multicultural competence rise of almost 0.253 units, should personal background characteristics, direct and indirect multicultural experiences be kept constant. This finding supports the applicability of Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) for increasing multicultural competence, highlighting in particular the effect of meaningful multicultural encounters (Wilson, 2017a; Valentine, 2008). This causal relationship identified is important as it provides empirical evidence on the causal effects of multicultural encounters (Wilson, 2017b), corroborating previous studies highlighting the importance of multicultural encounters in increasing multicultural competence or its aspects (Cui, 2016; Kahn et al., 2014; Smith et al., 1997; Seeberg & Minick, 2012; Holmes & O' Neil, 2012). This finding is particularly important as it proves the de-spatialised effect of multicultural encounters, as it shows how multicultural encounters are not spatiotemporally bound as their effect seems to be transferrable outside the micro-space in which multicultural friendships are shaped and performed, for example, translated in the present study as increased multicultural competence. All in all, this finding proves that multicultural encounters can be influential beyond the spatial and temporal constriction of the 'here and now' in which they arise (Valentine, 2008; Schuermans & Debruyne, 2017).

To sum up, these findings partly proved my original hypothesis regarding the effect of multicultural experiences and encounters on multicultural competence. Specifically, contrary to my initial expectations, no causal relationship was established between indirect

multicultural experiences and multicultural competence, but the hypothesised predictive power of direct multicultural experiences and multicultural encounters was empirically validated. It is also worth mentioning that, judging by the standardised coefficients of the effects exerted by direct multicultural experiences and multicultural friendships to multicultural competence, it seems like the former are more influential than the latter for multicultural competence, corroborating once again the beneficial role of international mobilities for (multicultural) learning (Waters, 2017). Finally, the statistically significant relational paths identified between indirect and direct multicultural experiences, multicultural encounters and multicultural competence provide useful information regarding how different forms of intercultural capital are "realised and realisable" as well as how they influence each other (Pöllman, 2014, n.p.).

4.3.2.2. Attachment to National Homogeneity

Attachment to national homogeneity was found to affect multicultural competence both directly and indirectly. In general, the more attached participants were to the idea of a homogenous nation, the lower their multicultural competence was. More specifically, each added point on the attachment to national homogeneity scale decreased multicultural competence by nearly 0.080 units, net the effect of all other variables included in the model. Regarding the variable's indirect effect, this was mediated through decreased attendance of diversity-related modules. In other words, the more a participant was attached to the idea of a homogenous nation, the less were the diversity-related modules the participant attended and the lower his/her multicultural competence. The negative influence that attachment to national homogeneity had on attendance of diversity-related modules could be translated as people lacking in diversity-friendly views showing a 'closure' towards learning experiences about perceived 'others'. This relationship echoes the positive correlation reported by Mau et al. (2008) between cosmopolitan attitudes and openness towards diversity.

The variable's total effect translated into a 0.089-unit decrease, should all the precedent independent and control variables be kept constant. This effect might initially seem negligible but, looking at the variables' respective standardised coefficients, which enable comparison between the different measures used for each variable, attachment to national homogeneity exerted both the strongest net and total effect on multicultural competence, with a standardised coefficient (*Beta*) of -0.294 and -0.313 respectively.

These findings support the initial hypothesis formed regarding the variable's effect. Moreover, they provide insights on the interrelation between personal and professional attitudes towards diversity among educators (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001), showing how nationalistic tendencies valuing homogeneity form a huge barrier on multicultural competence development. The magnitude of the detrimental effect that attachment to national homogeneity exerted on multicultural competence establishes a new path of influence that needs to be taken into serious consideration in countries like Greece, where the educational curricula are highly ethnocentric (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015), (re)producing national homogeneity based on common language, religion and traditions as an ideal.

4.3.2.3. University Training – Diversity-Related Modules Attended and Teaching Practicum

Attendance of diversity-related courses influenced multicultural competence significantly. Specifically, the more and richer diversity-related modules one attended, the higher one's multicultural competence was. A unit increase in the factor measuring attendance of diversity-related modules during teacher training studies resulted in a 0.148-unit increase in the factor measuring multicultural competence, net the effect of all the other variables included in the model. If all precedent variables were kept constant, then the variable's effect translated into an increase of 0.163 units for multicultural competence.

However, the effect of perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to the teaching practice experience outdid the one of diversity-related modules' attendance. More specifically, the more participants perceived multicultural education to be infused in their teaching practicum, the better they scored in multicultural competence. For a unit increase in the scale of perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to the teaching practice experience, multicultural competence increased by 0.026 units, keeping all other variables included in the model constant. This effect might seem negligible at first. However, looking at it in comparison with the effects exerted by the rest of the variables included in the model through its relevant standardised coefficient, perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to the teaching practicum was the second strongest predictor of multicultural competence in the present model ($Beta$ = 0.234). This seems to indicate that although diversity-related modules are important in enhancing multicultural competence, embedding multicultural education as a fundamental axis of the teaching practice experience is more influential.

These findings support the body of literature advocating that participation in diversity-related modules results in heightened multicultural competence (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Lawrence, 1997; Pohan, 1996; Weisman & Garza, 2002; Acquah & Commins, 2013; Kumar & Hammer, 2013; Still & Squires, 2015). However, the strongest effect exerted by the factor looking at the teaching practice experience indicates that experiencing multicultural education implementation as part of the teaching practicum is more powerful for pre-service teachers' multicultural competence than university-provided modules on the topic. This finding sheds light into how important exposure to diversity and encouragement for multicultural education implementation as part of the teaching practice experience is for the development of multicultural competence for pre-service teachers (Kourti & Androussou, 2013). This could be used as an indicator for the heightened need to include elements that bridge theory and practice, like multicultural service-learning experiences (Sleeter, 2001), as the best way to prepare multiculturally competent future educators.

Overall, this study's quantitative findings suggested that the statistical model constructed showed a good fit for and was statistically significant in predicting multicultural competence, with the predictors included in it accounting for 33.6% of the observed variance in the dependent variable (28.3% when adjusted for sample size and number of predictors). The present model seemed to be better than previous relevant ones, explaining nearly double the amount of variance in pre-service teachers' multicultural competence compared to Cui (2016). Gender, political orientation, direct multicultural experiences, multicultural encounters, diversity-related modules attended and perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to teaching practicum were all statistically significant predictors of multicultural competence for Greek pre-service teachers. Specifically, being female, endorsing liberal political values, having experience of travelling/studying abroad, attending diversity-related modules and perceiving multicultural education implementation as part of the teaching practice experience increased multicultural competence. On the contrary, being attached to the idea of a homogenous nation had a detrimental effect. The standardised total effects of the variables included provided comparable information regarding the statistically significant effects identified in the model. The most influential predictor for Greek pre-service teachers' multicultural competence was attachment to national homogeneity, with perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation in the teaching practicum, gender, direct multicultural experiences, political orientation, multicultural encounters and

attendance of diversity-related modules following in turn. Regarding the literature on the factors influencing pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, the quantitative part of this study responded to the call of Fu et al. (2017) for using multiple regression analysis with a large sample of pre-service teachers to explore the impact of different factors on multicultural competence. By doing so, these findings provided quantitative validation to the qualitative findings of Parkhouse et al. (2016), according to which, rather than solely focusing on diversity-related modules attended and study-abroad experiences, looking at the accumulation of personal and educational experiences in diverse spaces of learning across time provide more insights of pre-service teachers' multicultural competence.

More importantly, these findings empirically validated the theoretical propositions of geographies of youth and education, according to which students' subjectivities as well as the delivery and consumption of both formal and informal curricula, from the micro-level of the teaching practicum context to the macro-level of national homogeneity narratives (Bright et al., 2013: 751), influence students' experience of learning (Holloway & Jöns, 2012; Holloway et al., 2010; Brooks et al., 2012). Tracing a web of causal connections (Holloway et al., 2010), this study contributes to the literature on geographies of education, showing how socio-spatial positionalities (expressed here through gender), subjectivities, (depicted through political orientation and diverse levels of attachment to national homogeneity), personal experiences across time (translated as studying or travelling abroad and amount of multicultural encounters) as well as experiences of formal and informal curricula (reflected through diversity-related modules attended and perceived relevance of multicultural education to teaching practicum) all influence learning, measured here as multicultural competence. Moreover, these quantitative findings highlight the importance of thinking about education and learning relationally, as influenced both by placed-based and mobilities experiences (Waters, 2017). Moreover, this study's findings provide an initial response to Pöllman's (2009: 542) call for tracing the links between national identity, education and intercultural capital, by showing that attachment to national homogeneity was detrimental for intercultural capital, with multicultural competence constituting one of the latter's forms, while education (i.e. attendance of diversity-related modules) can help people learn to be multiculturally competent (ibid). On top of that, the present findings also provided empirical evidence showing how different forms of intercultural capital influence each other while being (re)produced (Pöllman, 2014). Specifically, speaking and being proficient in a foreign

language was found to enhance experiences of travelling and/or studying abroad, travelling and/or studying abroad increased multicultural friendships and through that multicultural competence, while more multicultural friendships also indirectly increased multicultural competence.

5. Qualitative Findings

This chapter will present the findings of the focus group discussions' analysis[21]. As mentioned in Chapter 3, thematic analysis was used to approach the qualitative data. The coding process was both deductive and inductive. On the one hand, the deductive coding was based on matching narrative excerpts with questionnaire axes or pilot study findings (e.g. multicultural competence and its components, namely attitudes, knowledge and skills). On the other hand, the inductive coding process was based solely on the content of the focus group discussions and led to additional codes, which either expanded upon the predetermined deductive ones (e.g. the gap between theory and practice in diversity-related teacher training) or were entirely new (e.g. the superficial approach of multicultural education implementation). In general, the thematic analysis led to the identification of three overarching themes, which provide useful information on participants' conceptualisations of multicultural competence and its implementation, the relationship between attachment to national homogeneity and multicultural competence as well as participants' experience of diversity-related modules and teaching practice.

Before I go on to present the aforementioned categories in an attempt to better understand pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and the factors influencing it, it is worth mentioning a more general comment on the terminology used to refer to multicultural diversity in the focus group discussions conducted. The generic terms 'culturally diverse' or 'from culturally diverse background' were purposefully chosen as reference terms, to leave the possibility open for the participants to attach the meaning they wanted to cultural differences. However, participants' responses made it clear that the meaning attributed to the aforementioned concepts was solely related to ethnoracial diversity, as participants kept on referring to the country's refugee population, immigrants (mainly Albanians), Muslims and far less frequently to Roma populations. As becomes clear, participants seemed to conceptualise cultural diversity as a characteristic of the 'other' rather than the self (Guo et al., 2009; Maylor, 2009), corroborating the evidence provided in Chapter 2, regarding the mainstream conceptualisations of cultural diversity among the Greek public.

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[21] A detailed description regarding the numbering, place and participants of each focus group discussion is provided in Appendix H.

5.1. Conceptualisations of Multicultural Competence in Theory and Practice

In general, participants acknowledged multicultural competence as a necessary and useful skill for their professional career as future educators (Guo et al., 2009), which corroborated similar findings from the questionnaire survey. The following quotes are indicative examples of participants' responses, when asked about the relevance of multicultural competence for their future career as educators:

> Focus Group (FG) 4
>
> Facilitator: *So, I would like you to tell me if you think multicultural competence is a necessary skill for you as future educators.*
>
> Toula: *For sure it is, because future Greek classrooms are going to be comprised of students with multicultural backgrounds to a great extent. Because there will be, there already are a lot of refugees, and there will be more* […]. *Refugee children are for sure going to be integrated in the Greek educational system and we will be called to teach them and so we will need to have this skill. We need to know what and how to teach but also have attitudes that promote this.*
>
> […]
>
> Elena: *I'm not talking about myself, but you* (referring to her fellow participants) *are young people, you might* […] *teach somewhere else in Europe.*
>
> FG6
>
> Marianna: *Yes, I believe it has now become necessary. E, basically not just now, because, eh…* [migratory] *movements are a timeless phenomenon, it has been happening for a lot of years, either with repatriates, or immigrants or anything else, but, eh…today, living nowadays with such a high number of refugees that have come to Greece, it is necessary, because more and more kids get integrated to school,* [kids of] *refugees, I mean, or* [of] *immigrants, I don't know, and surely* [this] *is gonna be a challenge that an educator will face at some point of time*.
>
> Mairi: *I agree because in case an educator is not trained, he/she presents this whole thing as a problem to his/her surroundings, the fact that he/she has kids of immigrants in the classroom and the rest, whereas, in reality, this is the reality, this is 'the now'* […] *so it is a fact, it should not be presented as something new, as something weird. This is an existing situation, a permanent situation* […].

The aforementioned quotes show how Toula, Marianna and Mairi understood that multicultural classrooms are and will be the norm rather than an exception in Greece, an opinion held by all focus group participants. This finding seems to suggest that participants have endorsed the relevant observations regarding the multicultural nature of the contemporary Greek student population made by academics (e.g. Spinthourakis et al., 2010;

Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011; Palaiologou & Evangelou, 2015) and policy documents (e.g. Law 2413/1996), as presented earlier on in the Literature Review chapter. Toula, Marianna and Mairi presented the majority justification for the importance of multicultural competence. Specifically, they argued that, since multicultural classrooms form part of the Greek educational reality, teachers need to be appropriately trained, so that they can successfully address them and raise awareness to their surroundings. This argumentation follows the same logic, upon which the most recent European policy initiatives are based (e.g. European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013; PPMI, 2017) as well as the findings of academics looking at the context of Greek initial teacher training (Palaiologou, 2004; Paleologou & Evangelou, 2003, 2007; Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013; Nikolaou, 2011; Sakka, 2010). Elena, however, adopted a more outward-looking approach to the usefulness of multicultural competence as a transferable professional skill in today's globalised world. Being significantly older than her peers and already having a family in Greece, she excluded herself from the prospect of searching for employment abroad. However, she mentioned that her peers should consider multicultural competence as a skill that could give them the opportunity to escape from the national context and its high youth unemployment rates, opening doors for employment abroad. This mind set illustrates the need for multicultural competence for educators aiming at working abroad, pointed out recently on a relevant online publication (Deady, 2017).

Based on the unanimous consensus regarding the importance and usefulness of multicultural competence arisen by the multicultural nature of today's classrooms, all participants agreed that the institution of distinct intercultural schools in Greece should be abolished as all schools today are multicultural anyway. Two particularly reflexive participants in one of the focus groups, who heavily criticised the ethnocentric orientation of the Greek educational system, pinpointed the hidden message of exacerbating the distinction between "us" and "them" that a separation between intercultural and "normal" schools conveys:

> FG4:
>
> Tzeni: *If you have intercultural schools for diverse students only and schools for Greek students only, you give students a specific picture, saying 'Look, as an institution, I do this separation. My aim is to instil certain values into you. Consequently, since I promote something like that, it is logical that you will internalise it'.*
>
> […]

Jimis: […] *you keep on separating the children, meaning 'it's us and them'.*

Such statements go in accordance with the idea that the establishment of intercultural schools and their almost exclusive attendance by culturally diverse students in some cases (Tsaliki, 2012; Nikolou, 2000) in substance (re)produces the juxtaposition between 'culturally diverse' and 'native' students and denotes that culturally diverse students and native students should be educated in separate spaces. This fits the words of Currie (2006) presented earlier on in the Literature Review chapter, according to which such practices (re)produce students with a culturally diverse background as 'minorities, margins and misfits' and their education as excluded from the educational 'mainstream'. Consequently, this indicates that participants realised that intercultural schools as a measure of facilitating multicultural education is based on 'separation' (Damanakis, 1997) instead of the promotion of meaningful intergroup contact and dialogue across the student body.

More importantly, in another focus group, two participants, who showed strong attitudes towards the inclusion of diversity in the Greek society in general, advocated for the advantages of mixed classrooms, using arguments promoting the beneficial role of diversity as a source of reducing ethnocentrism and promoting multicultural understanding:

FG5

Malena: *I agree with the girls. I believe that there should be intercultural schools in which…basically, all schools in general should be mixed, so that, we too, as Greeks, could get to know the culture of other countries, of other children, because the children will transmit their culture and I believe that this will make us a bit better from the perspective that we would learn to interact with other countries, other cultures and not remain so focused in ours, our history. Eh, so that we can evolve our…, yes, to evolve our history, should diverse elements be included, I believe.*

Pepi: *I believe that there should be mixed schools, but…eh, I mean, not exclusively divided into intercultural or solely…, how can I put it,* […] *all together in mixed schools. This will create a lot of opportunities. Not only for the children* [i.e. the students], [but also] *for the parents and the educators. This will be a development in their* [i.e. the latter] *experiences, knowledge and an additional training.*

Malena advocated for mixed classrooms in all schools focusing on the advantage of multicultural contact. More specifically, she believed that the diversity brought in by culturally diverse students is going to broaden the natives' perspectives. She specifically

mentioned that mixed schools would broaden the mind of natives by making them realise, through everyday interaction with culturally diverse individuals, that their perspective is not universal. Moreover, Malena perceived diversity as an advantage that can help Greeks escape their fixation with their past historical achievements and develop a new history, including cultural elements from the diverse cultural groups currently residing in Greece. Pepi added parents and educators to those benefited by the presence of diversity in all schools. All in all, what was special in the argumentation presented above is that both participants understood diversity as a source of richness as opposed to "a reason for separation" (Arslan, 2013: 16), as an advantage that could help all agents involved in the schooling context gain new experiences and escape monocultural thinking.

However, in five out of the six focus group discussions conducted, participants' initial reaction was that multicultural education implementation is relevant only for classrooms in which culturally diverse students are present. This assumption has previously been identified as an indicator of a faulty conceptualisation of multicultural education (Dervin, 2017; Jones & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Mysore, Lincoln, & Wavering, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2011; Sleeter & Grant, 2003) and aligns with the hidden message promoted by the multicultural educational initiatives implemented so far in Greece, according to which multicultural education is relevant only for those with "educational, social, cultural and learning specificities" (Maniatis, 2012: 163). In fact, for some participants, the presence of two or three students with a culturally diverse background was not an adequate reason for them to perceive the classrooms they taught in during their teaching practicum as multicultural or implement multicultural education. This initial reflexive response denotes the perpetuation of understandings according to which the 'multicultural' is only relevant for the 'other'. Only after participants were specifically asked to comment on whether multicultural education can solely be applied when culturally diverse students are physically present, they started talking about the usefulness of multicultural education for perceived 'homogenous' classrooms using arguments like the ones presented below:

> FG2
>
> Maria: *I believe that it* [i.e. multicultural education] *has to do with Greek students, too, because, whether there is immigrant presence or not, we need to know that countries are now multicultural. That we are going to live, to live together, to interact with people from other countries. Consequently, we need to be brought up in a climate that will make us not being racists.* [We need to learn]

to not fear the "diverse" or the "foreign". So, we need to promote such elements to our students independent of whether students from other countries are present in the classroom or not.

FG4

Jimis: *In the 21st century, as homogenous as classrooms with Greek only children might be, wherever they* [i.e. Greek students] *might live, they will meet people that are not from Greece. We are in the 21st century, it is highly likely that they will go away and work abroad.*

Tzeni: *Or, for example, they might go on a trip abroad.*

Jimis: *Yes, that too, or their future neighbour might be from Syria or wherever. Consequently, it will be very good for them to have learnt to think that (it's not only that) 'I am Greek and there's no one else (in the world)' but that 'there are a lot (of diverse people) together and I happened to be Greek'.*

Toula: *And they need to learn to respect the people around them.*

Jimis: *Yes. So, we should aim to make global citizens.*

Toula: *That.* […] *And* [Greek students should learn] *to think about themselves not only in terms of a small group but also a bigger one. What Jimis said, that 'it's not only me, my family, my neighbourhood, my country' and it stops there. 'There's me, my country, there are other countries, we all interact with each other within the framework of a globalised world. This ecumenical...*

Maria, Jimis, Tzeni and Toula supported the need for Greek students to start to think about themselves in a global context, exceeding the strict national imaginaries of belonging. This idea echoes Bodnar and Yatsenko's (2016: 227) comment about the need for "a more comprehensive approach to diversity" which is relevant not only for the sake of "newcomer or minority students" but for all students, as diversity will be an integral part of everyone's future school life, community and workplace.

Participants' stance towards the usefulness of multicultural education discussed above was an indicator that, although participants seemed to be aware of the benefits of multicultural education for all students, this awareness had not yet been fully internalised and thus, discursively at least, multicultural education was still reflexively associated with the 'other'. So, despite the acknowledgment of multicultural competence as important and multicultural education as useful for all, this seemed to remain more within the occasional conversations

prompted by the focus groups rather than fully permeate participants' mindsets (Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018).

Another misconception regarding multicultural competence became evident, when participants were prompted to talk regarding enacting multicultural competence in practice. Their discourse regarding the specific strategies they would employ to implement multicultural pedagogy showed a rather limited repertoire (ibid; Still & Squires, 2015). To begin with, it is interesting to observe how participants' suggested teaching strategies reflected a misunderstanding of equity as equality, a common misconception on one of the fundamental components of multicultural competence for social justice (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Gorski & Swalwell, 2015; November, 2017).

> FG1:
>
> Natasa: *We should treat them* [i.e. the students] *the same.*
>
> Anna: *Exactly.*
>
> Natasa: *The way I behave towards a Greek student, the same way I would behave towards a refugee student.*
>
> Facilitator: *Can you tell me what do you mean by that?*
>
> Natasa: *For example, I am not going to change the tone of my voice, I'm going to speak the same to everyone.*
>
> FG2
>
> Efstathia: *From my teaching practice, despite the fact that I am in an intercultural school, in my class we have 2 students that are from another country, but I do not treat them in any special way. I behave to them the same way I behave to everyone else.*
>
> Facilitator: *Just to not be misunderstood, I do not mean treating them as special. I mean, is this* [i.e. their diverse background]) *something you've discussed with the leading teacher or the head of the teaching practice?*
>
> Efstathia: *No, because there has been no issue: 'oh, we have these 2 students from another country in the classroom, what can we do differently for them?'. They are, yes, yes, they form a whole, these students cannot be treated differently.*

The words of Natasa and Efstathia resonated the misconception of equity as providing everyone with the same treatment, similar to the one identified by the teachers participating in the study of Schoorman and Bogotch (2010). However, proud claims about the inability to see differences among students and the use of precisely the same manner for all students

indicate ‘blindness’ to cultural difference (Allard, 2006; Hachfeld et al., 2015; Mahon, 2006). Teachers indifferent to cultural differences “fail to see that they are not only negating students’ identities, but also that they are depriving themselves of the means to really understand their students as social beings” (Ogay & Edelmann, 2016: 393). Uniformity in treatment does not equate to fair treatment for all since notions of universality often neglect material and/or embodied differences (Allard, 2006). In other words, this logic does not challenge the structural inequalities that promote educational disparities among natives and culturally diverse students (Berliner, 2013; Gorski, 2016). Treating everyone the same without changing any of the underlying structures that privilege the national majority is not going to promote a social justice education, as equity cannot be achieved by neglecting inequity (Gorski, 2009b, 2012). “Treating students alike” should not be confused with treating students equally (Yang & Montgomery, 2013). On the contrary, a multiculturally skilful educator with a social justice orientation should try to equalise upwards, providing marginalised students with extra opportunities that are going to compensate for their unequal access to learning compared to their majority peers.

Moreover, when asked to suggest examples of practical implementation for tackling issues faced by culturally diverse students, the vast majority of the participants “focused on superficial aspects of diversity rather than on the institutional policies and practices that maintain entrenched power relations in place” (Nieto, 2017: 6). Following Sleeter and McLaren (1995: 12), participants distanced multicultural education from “social struggles and redefined it to mean the celebration of ethnic foods and festivals”. Specifically, participants came up with a superficial approach focusing on ‘foods, festival, fashion and folklore’ (Cai, 1998: 319; Chin, 2010). But “cultural arts and crafts are not about equity because they are no threat to inequity” (Gorski, 2016: 225).

The following quotes provide some examples that participants offered as educational practices that they would adapt to facilitate culturally diverse students’ integration in their classrooms. When prompted to provide concrete examples on how to practically achieve this, their responses were restricted to add-on, celebrating-diversity approaches (Moodley, 2001; Still & Squires, 2015), following the folkloric approach to culturally diverse students noted in Greek teachers by Kourti and Androussou (2013):

FG1

Natasa: *For example, we could arrange a day between us on which to talk about Syria.*

Theano: *This, yes.*

Anna: *Exactly.*

Natasa: *To bring Syrian foods.*

Theano: *To be the day of Syria that day. We will talk about the traditions…so the kids could feel a bit at ease, more familiar.*

Panos: *A little fest? Greek food…*

Theano: *Yes.*

Focus group one focused on the integration of refugee students, probably as this has recently been a hot topic, due to the refugee students' presence and the state's policy attempts to facilitate their integration within the Greek educational system. Natasa grouped refugee students under the 'Syrian' marker and proposed the organisation of a Syrian-themed festival. Her fellow participants agreed with this suggestion, arguing that it will help refugee students feel a bit more welcomed. As becomes clear, participants' discourse tended to bracket diverse cultures with a uniform set of defining characteristics, creating a hegemonic narrative in which diverse cultures are essentialised and translated into what the majority's representation perceives them to be. Such an approach treats culture as a token and often promotes stereotypes and misconceptions, trivialising and exoticising cultural communities (Banks, 2006). Consequently, as Gorski (2016: 224) aptly puts it, multiculturally competent educators acting as advocates of social justice "should focus on the individual cultural identities of individual students rather than on lists of presumed cultural traits stereotypically attributed to entire groups of people based on language, race, ethnicity, class, immigration status, or other identities".

In general, it seems like for most participants, "acknowledging differences meant cultural celebrations" (Guo et al., 2009: 8). It is worth noticing how participants struggled to escape the 'celebrating diversity' paradigm, even when they brainstormed about ways of promoting respect towards cultural diversity through education:

FG1

Panos: A little fest? Greek food…

Theano: Yes.

Panos: [Including] *food from the other countries as well.*

Theano: *Exactly.*

Panos: *A theatrical play*

Theano: *Music,* […] *traditional dances of the various countries.*

The same thing happened when discussing about tackling the marginalisation of culturally diverse students:

FG4

Jimis: *I would try to find out why native students marginalise their culturally diverse classmate. Are they afraid of him? Did he do something to them?* […] *If there was something on, I'd try to find out why this happened. If not, the next few days I'd organise…what could I organise? A food festival. Each one should bring a traditional recipe. I would show that he eats and drinks too, 'he is like me, what his parents prepared is tasty'.* […] *To get to know him basically, to see who he is, what his culture is, what people eat where he comes from, how do they live, what traditions they have.*

The aforementioned examples reflect a cursory implementation of multicultural pedagogies, often referred to as "cultural tourism" (Still & Squires, 2015: 163) for the dominant groups. This approach denotes how activities like the ones proposed by the focus groups participants are not compatible with culturally competent educators. They form a safe choice, only superficially dealing with the issue of diversity, as they enable dominant group members "to travel to learn about marginalised groups and return safely to their dominant position without ever having to challenge their own biases or the institutional process" (re)producing inequalities (ibid). In other words, a 'cultural tourism' approach devalues diverse cultures, treating them as something additive, only worth studying in a few instances throughout the school timetable (ibid; Childs, 2017). As Derman-Sparks (1989) explains, this approach addresses diversity issues inadequately and fails in effectively supporting culturally-diverse students' positive identity development as well as in fostering intergroup respect.

Although participants clearly struggled to discursively reproduce their multicultural teaching skills, their narratives showed some evidence of multicultural teaching knowledge during a discussion based on a hypothetical scenario. More specifically, participants were called to imagine that they are leading teachers in a classroom, in which they observe that their

culturally diverse students systematically underachieve compared to their peers and brainstorm about potential causes for this phenomenon. Although in four out of six groups participants mentioned the students' limited language skills as the first cause, probably influenced by the importance given to this factor by Greek educational policy initiatives, when portraying culturally diverse students, they were also able to look beyond the language barrier and identify other potential causes, like feelings of peer exclusion and marginalisation or unfamiliarity regarding teachers' expectations from students in the Greek educational system:

> FG4
>
> Toula: *It might be because they have not been integrated in the social group of the classroom. I mean, they have no company, they have no, no friends, they can't feel safe and accepted by the group so they lag behind in their educational attainment too.*
>
> […]
>
> Jimis: *If they completely understand the language, it might just be that the Greek educational system mentality is not common for them. For example, a student,* [it might be] *too extreme, I don't think we're going to find that, from the East, from China. They consider it rude to interrupt the teacher to ask* [something] *or to work in groups. Here, you will consider this problematic. 'Why is he not asking me even if I tell him to do so? Why is he not stopping me?'. You should just consider it as* [for him] *'it is rude to interrupt you'. Just that. Meaning* [it is because this student] *has a different culture, he has been used to a different mentality.*

Toula picked up the psychosocial reasons that might lead to low educational achievement. More specifically, she put the blame on feelings of alienation, solitude and exclusion by the peers. Jimis focused on the effect that the mismatch between different educational systems and cultural expectations might have. His example of the Chinese's respect for authority might be considered a stereotype, but he seemed to understand that students, who have experienced educational systems praising certain values, might struggle while adjusting in a new system praising different values and thus they might underachieve.

Some participants tried to search for contributing factors outside school and this was where familial background came onto the table. This issue was touched upon differently by participants though, with most of them adopting just a superficial approach (e.g. following the logic of 'culturally diverse parents have themselves language difficulties, so they are not

able to assist their children at home'), if not a deficit one, according to which parents from a culturally diverse background lack in educational aspirations. A small minority, though, comprised of highly reflexive participants, who supported the need for diversity inclusion and understood that Greek society and its structure had to change in order for this to materialise, stood out, identifying societal structural barriers that potentially hinder parental involvement. The following excerpt presents an example of two different approaches in trying to explain the potential lack of parental support as a reason for culturally diverse students' underachievement:

> FG6
>
> Evi: *I think the first thing we need to check is if their parents speak Greek. I mean, parents that don't have a good command of the Greek language, this will definitely have an impact on their children. I mean* [...] *if for example they cannot assist their child with their homework or to start speaking a bit of Greek, I think this will play out and will have an impact on the students' achievement.*
>
> Mairi: *I agree but I would like to add that although I would check if they speak the language, even if they spoke the language, because when immigrants come to our country they don't have the best wages and they are thus made to work long hours or do various jobs, they might not even be able to be at home to help their children with their homework, so this might keep them behind.*

In the above quote both participants seemed knowledgeable about the additive value of parental support in learning. Having this in mind, participants in general showed the willingness to reach out to collaborate with the families of culturally diverse students as a means of enhancing students' learning. This strategy was also cherished by the participants in the study of Fu et al. (2017: 133). Mairi, though, presented an even more critical stance, acknowledging the time limitations that culturally diverse parents face due to their precarious job status. Her words revealed the structural issues and the power dynamics that hinder culturally diverse parental involvement in their kids' learning process. Acknowledgement of forms of structural inequalities like the one picked up by Mairi has been identified as a quintessential element of multicultural competence with a social justice orientation. As Gorski puts it (2016: 222, following Berliner, 2013), multiculturally competent teachers can only promote social justice and equity if they are able to identify "the social, political, and structural conditions that marginalise people economically and, as a result, create the educational disparities" that they as "equity advocates should want to destroy".

Finally, the teachers' responsibility was also brought up as a potential reason for culturally diverse students' underachievement, although mentioned only by Pepi and Anna, two participants with a very critical stance towards the role of education, its agents and processes in promoting or discouraging culturally diverse students' learning and sense of belonging. The following excerpts show how this issue was approached by them in detail:

> FG5
>
> Pepi: […] *I want to highlight that the educator might be responsible. Based on what Andrianna* [previously] *said, that 'there is no time at home'* [i.e. for homework]. *It might be the case that parents work, ok? It might be x, y, z that happens at home.* [What I am saying is] *why is homework not done at school so that the kid has nothing to study at home?* […] *Firstly, I have in my mind that it might be the educator's fault because he might have turned this student* [i.e. the culturally diverse one] *into a target and because he* [i.e. the student] *is the target all the time, he might not feel good in the classroom and consequently his achievement is dropping.* […] *I put it as the educator's fault in terms of his head is narrow and he doesn't like that he has such diversity in his classroom.* […] *So, everything is Giannakis' fault, because he's Roma. Everything is his fault because he's from a different race. One aspect is this and the other is that the educator might not act appropriately from the point of view that he sees that parental support is not available, for example, they* [i.e. the parents] *do not know the language, so they cannot help their kids with their homework. So, why are these homework activities not done during the after-school club or in the classroom or why are they not reduced?*
>
> FG1
>
> Anna: *It might be our issue, I mean, we, as educators might be responsible for that.* […] *In theory, our students should leave the classroom, leave school and be ready (i.e. with no homework). [...] I think, personally, that we, as educators, should give these particular kids (i.e. the culturally diverse ones) extra help, because, as we said, they do not have (parental) support, ok?*
>
> Facilitator: *Can you please tell me what you mean by 'extra help'?*
>
> Anna: *To be able to adjust (to their needs)… either stay longer/find extra hours or sometimes to adjust our teaching on these kids.*
>
> Facilitator: *Can you give me an example?*
>
> Anna: *I do not mean to lower the activities' standards.* […] *What I am saying is that we need to adjust our teaching or find activities either additional or alternative for these kids* […] *like diversified teaching.* […] *Give these kids that extra bit of help.*

Avoiding deficit ideologies according to which “lack of achievement resides in the student, not the teacher” (Still & Squires, 2015: 171), Pepi and Anna emphasised that what determines students’ success is the teaching and learning conditions prevalent in the classroom. Both participants advocated for the responsibility of the educator in creating appropriate learning conditions and preparing relevant educational material for the students. They considered the teacher as an agent who has to tackle pre-existing inequalities (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016) through targeted, individualised interventions, like tackling the lack of parental support at home by assisting culturally diverse students with homework at school. Pepi also talked about how teachers who view cultural diversity through deficit lenses might scapegoat culturally diverse students for all the problems present in their classroom, thus putting them off from participation in the learning process. All in all, both participants endorsed the stance that it is up to the educator to successfully approach and target the needs of the culturally diverse students present in the classroom.

Apart from the hypothetical scenario on the potential reasons leading culturally diverse students to underachieve, discussions around the Greek educational curriculum and its content brought up participants’ multicultural knowledge. Specifically, the ethnocentric orientation of the Greek primary school educational curriculum was picked up by all participants as a structural barrier contributing to the marginalisation of culturally diverse students (Faas, 2011a, 2011b; Gkaintartzi et al., 2015). The following quote illustrates the most critical comment made in relation to that, acknowledging the tight relationship between national identity and education in the Greek educational system (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011), despite the introduction of intercultural education as one of the basic pillars of the national curricula since 2003:

FG3

Sophie: […] *The Greek public education has anyway, as defined by the Constitution, it has Greek elements like religion and history. You can tell me that this happens in other countries as well. But* [in Greece], *Religious Education and History are so deeply ingrained in all the other modules, at least this was the case when we were students, because now the curriculum has changed,* […] *that when someone comes* […] *having another citizenship, he/she faces problems at school. This is why recently there is this tendency to focus on interculturalism. Teachers need to learn* [about interculturalism] *because this knowledge is lacking.* […] *Like this we start introducing interculturalism in schools. Although this concept was also present in the past, we now start to understand that the way that the Greek education is structured has to change somewhat, because there are*

> *people coming from other countries and the horizons have to be broadened.* […] *We need to stop talking only about Greece and whoever is not Greek to have no voice, for example.*

Sophie acknowledged that there still is a close relationship between Greek history, Christian Orthodox religion and education (Chalari & Georgas, 2016), despite mentioning a potential change brought by the introduction of interculturalism in the primary school curriculum. What she was referring to is the Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework for Compulsory Education, which under the general aims of education, lists the provision of equal learning opportunities for all students and the enhancement of students' cultural and linguistic identity, within a multicultural society (Pedagogical Institute, 2003: 11). However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the same document also highlights the need for preserving Greek national identity and cultural awareness (ibid: 5). Thus, as Sophie pointed out, although efforts have been made to instil multicultural elements in the new curricula, the prevalence of Greek culture is still present (Chalari & Georgas, 2016; Spinthourakis & Karakatsanis, 2011; Maniatis, 2012; Kakos & Palaiologou, 2014). Sophie perceived the marginal multicultural references made in the educational curricula (Katsarou & Tsafos, 2010) as problematic for the current multicultural student population. More specifically, she thought that this strong connection between Greek national identity, understood as a common past (i.e. history) and Christian Orthodox religion, and the content of Greek education alienates non-Greek students and completely excludes their perspectives. She thus highlighted the need for raising awareness on that among educators as well as the need for altering these exclusionary curricula.

All participants advocated the need for curricular change, especially for the Religious Education and History modules, although this idea remained mostly on a theoretical level, as participants had no tangible practices to offer towards this direction. Moreover, the need for change in the national curricula was conceptualised differently among the participants, ranging from simply changing the teaching methods used by educators to changing the narrative of the benevolent Greeks and the evil 'others'. The majority of participants' comments revealed a conservative stance towards curricular transformation, viewing the incorporation of multicultural elements as an 'add-on' approach, relevant only in certain instances and under certain circumstances, following the approach adapted so far by the Greek educational curricula, meaning accommodating multicultural perspectives only if they

do not threaten the 'grand national narrative' of monocultural nationalism (Chalari & Georgas, 2016; Katsarou & Tsafos, 2010; Zachos, 2013):

> FG1
>
> Natasa: […] *I always believed and still believe that, for the Religious Education module, we need to be taught that module but, as I said before,* [there is a need for] *change in its curriculum with the incorporation of other religions.* […] *We can only implement this in practice in senior years, when the abstract thought of the children has been developed. So, Religious Education in Greek schools starts in Years 3 and 4. For me, towards this intercultural direction, we can* [go] *after Year 5, 6.*

Natasa, although explicitly advocating for interculturalism, implicitly revealed a preference for the primacy of the Greek Orthodox religion, coming up with excuses for not initiating meaningful curricular content transformation through the infusion of multicultural elements. This stance is perfectly aligned with the long tradition of Greek Religious Educational curricula priming Orthodoxy and only marginal references being made to other Christian traditions, world religions and worldviews (Koukounaras Liagkis, 2015; Fokas & Markoviti, 2017). This is further reflected in her quote above as she believes that, although more religions should be included in the Religious Education curricula, this change should not be initiated since the very beginning of Religious Education teaching, as students at this point are too young to process such plurality. A similar stance was adapted by Victoria and Valmira, when commenting on the need for curricula reformation:

> FG3
>
> Victoria: [I would like] *all the curricula to change* […] *but I cannot advocate for the change of the Religious Education curriculum because I do not think it is appropriate to confuse very young children with* [various] *religions. I think it's pointless.* […] *now the change initiated is for students as young as Y3 to learn about Buddha, Allah and the Dragon as one.* […] *I think, like this, I will create confusion instead of helping the students. Referring to the young age of primary school students* [this is]. *If we talk about education in general including middle and upper high school, there definitely needs to be a change in History, as well. Because we see History with blinkers. Greeks as heroes and all these things need to be somewhat more relaxed.*
>
> […]
>
> Valmira: *I think we're asking a lot from primary school children. I mean, we're asking them not to discriminate on the basis of religion and they're fighting because they're boys and girls.* […] *We need to talk about a different age group if we talk about starting to understand the difference in religion and history.*

For Victoria and Valmira, multicultural education implementation and curricula reformation towards this direction were relevant only for post-primary education. Instead of seeing the introduction of multicultural education elements from early years as an advantage for both the native students' attitudes and the culturally diverse students' feelings of inclusion and self-esteem, they viewed them as a reason for confusion. Both Victoria and Valmira's discourse resonates the hostile climate developed around the new RE curricula and the attempt to transform their content from a theological approach, solely related to the Christian Orthodox dogma, to a religious-studies one, related to different religions, cultures and traditions (Koukounaras Liagkis, 2015). Moreover, although Victoria mentioned the need for curricular change, she focused more on teaching methods than content, as the following quote shows:

> FG3
>
> Victoria: *Changing things is very hard. What I mean is that in Religious Education, I can't tell you that I think is nice* [for the students] *to be taught about all religions at once in primary school. They are too young, they do not have the critical ability.* […] *History might be easier to change* […] *to be taught in a more multi-perspective way. Neither constantly teaching about the Greeks only nor taking the Greek element out because foreigners have come and we need to accept them and promote their history. Just History teaching to become more multi-perspective.* […] *we need to step back from* […] *reading, believing, reciting and being examined on a single text. In other words,* [we should instead] *watch a video, read another source, read many sources basically, get the children to search for a topic on their own in encyclopaedias, the internet, wherever they like* […]*, visit a museum.*
>
> Facilitator: *Without changing the national content?*
>
> Victoria: *Of course the national content will be changed. As today only one side of the coin is promoted, it will be better to learn about the other side, as well. We* [Greeks] *did not only win but also lost* [in History wars].
>
> Sophie: *In whatever opportunity arises within History's curriculum. For example,* [in the lesson] *about Balkan wars, to get introduced to Balkans.*
>
> […]
>
> Victoria: *I also think this could potentially happen in the* [Greek] *Language* [module]. *We could include texts in which, instead of 'Maria and Pavlos', we could use foreign names* […]

Victoria started by expressing a sense of hopelessness in terms of initiating curricular change, which seems to prevent her from seeing what she could actually contribute on this topic (De La Mare, 2014). Thus, she ended up arguing more for a change in the teaching methods of History rather than its content. She made it clear that Greek History should continue to be taught as an inward-looking national narrative (Zervas, 2012) but instead of showing only the grandeur of Greeks, it should also inform students about wars in which Greeks lost. No mention was made to the inclusion of culturally diverse elements in History. Sophie's example made it clear that, if elements of other cultures were to be included, this could only be done as an addition to instances, in which other cultures are already mentioned in the History curriculum. Consequently, the ideas of Valmira and Victoria reflect Zachos' (2013) observation regarding the inclusion of diversity in History in the current curricula, according to which, although mentions related to the achievements of 'others' are not missing anymore, those are only presented when they assist the grand national narrative. The final point about the introduction of foreign names in textbooks is another sign that Victoria only agreed to superficial changes for accommodating diversity and refused to change the deepest, systemic roots of the problem. She seems to miss the implicit hegemony of ethnocentric perspectives present in the existing curricula and school practices and the exclusion of voices and contributions of non-dominant groups as valued content (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016). All in all, it becomes apparent that what Victoria envisaged as changes needed to be made were all elements not interrupting the precedence of the Greek against any other culture. The following quotes by Mairi, Tzeni and Toula show a more critical stance on the topic:

> FG6
>
> Mairi: […] *textbooks are not intended for these* [i.e. culturally diverse] *kids and only when the teachers want it* […]*, only when the teachers want it a lot are going to succeed in incorporating elements that they themselves have searched for, to incorporate them in the classroom, so that they can help students that are from another country. Otherwise, if they simply follow the curriculum,* […]*, they are not going to help these kids; the kids will stay stagnant.*

Mairi acknowledged how textbooks are alienating culturally diverse students, not representing their perspectives. Her comment about the inappropriateness of Greek textbooks for culturally diverse students reflects the observations made by academics on the textbooks' ethnocentric nature (Zervas, 2012; Zachos, 2013; Faas, 2011a, 2011b; Palaiologou et al., 2012). Consequently, she concluded that it is up to the educator to take action towards

eliminating this unequal representation and facilitate inclusion. Based on that same observation regarding the textbooks' inappropriateness, Tzeni and Toula suggested radical changes to the narrative of the Greek History curriculum:

FG4

Tzeni: *It is also this thing that History tries to instil us* [that needs to change], *that 'the others* [are] *the enemies, we* [are] *the goodies'*

Toula: *Yes, yes, this ethnocentric [element].*

Tzeni: '*We never did bad to anyone, never harmed anyone'*.

Tzeni and Toula criticised the single-sided approach of Greeks in History teaching, as the benevolent people that only did great things without causing any trouble. They pinpointed how this representation of Greeks as 'good' is combined with the presentation of the others as 'evil', turning History teaching into an ethnocentric deal. Taking into consideration relevant comments made by other participants, this distinction between 'us' and 'them' was said to further promote the conceptualisation of ethnic difference as 'otherness' and as bound to 'evil' traits.

In general, although the proposition for curricular transformation made by all participants remained mostly on a theoretical level, the nature and intensity of curricular changes suggested at times appeared to be conditional upon participants' openness to multicultural belonging. In other words, participants, whose narratives showed evidence of cherishing the idea of preserving the idea of Greece as a distinct, homogenous nation, were more modest in their suggestions for curricula change compared to their counterparts. Participants' attachment to national homogeneity and its negative influence on conceptualisations around issues of cultural diversity and belonging in the general societal level as well as in educational is going to be presented in detail in the following section.

5.2. Attachment to National Homogeneity: Diversity, Representation and Belonging in the Greek Educational System and Society

Across the discussions, participants showed a friendly stance towards diversity and the need to promote diversity inclusion in Greek society and the educational system. Participants in general expressed positive emotions in relation to the introductory sets of prompts depicting a black boy and a girl wearing a headscarf carrying the Greek flag during parades on Greek national commemoration days, as well as to the prompts dealing with the granting of

citizenship to second generation migrants. However, some participants stood out with statements pointing towards a dissonance between diversity and 'Greekness', following the dominant political and societal discourse before the new citizenship law, according to which cultural identities were situated in opposition to the national identity, (re)producing 'otherness' (Mavroudi & Holt, 2015). All participants from the first focus group conducted in the department of Northern Greece (FG3) and one participant from the first discussion conducted in Southern Greece (FG5) fell under this category. Relevant statements revealing an attachment to national homogeneity initially came up while discussing upon the first set of images presented to the participants as a kick-starter for the focus group discussions.

In respond to the first set of prompts, the girl wearing the headscarf was considered as contrasting the idea of Greekness and what is celebrated on that day. Athina's comment made it clear that the Muslim girl was perceived as an embodied representation of 'Turkishness' and thus the focus of her narrative was the controversy arising from this girl carrying the flag and the commemoration of Greeks abolishing the Turkish occupation as follows:

> FG5
>
> Athina: […] *I do not like the image I'm seeing because, let's say, the girl, who should logically be Muslim, when you are on a commemoration about when Greece fought the history with Turks, it is a bit diminishing for the rest of the community to see. She might accept it* [i.e. the history], *she might be raised here, got good grades and deserve it [i.e. the flag] but it is a bit diminishing for us. Because, I am not saying that it is wrong she got the flag, but simply, as an image, if it was then, let's say, that people got slaughtered with Turkey and they had us under Ali Pasa occupied for so many year, I consider it a bit diminishing towards me, since I know so much* [about] *history, to see this girl raising the Greek flag.* […] *It is a bit of an offence, if it is this national commemoration day, it is as an offence for us, after all that history that we carry behind us, for this reason we commemorate on the 25th of March and* [commemorative] *presentations are held in schools and the children learn about the war against Turkey when all this happened, the Greek flag to be raised by…*

Athina was particularly awkward when commenting on the prompt depicting the Muslim girl carrying the flag. She seemed hesitant about the words she should use to describe the girl, which is why in some cases she ended up not naming it at all. Her silence at the end is particularly telling in that respect. In general, in her narrative, Athina drew a clear distinction between 'us' and 'them', with the latter being the group to which the girl is ascribed due to

her Muslim faith. Being Muslim was considered too different and thus a reason for not belonging (Mavroudi, 2010). Through her discourse, it became clear that the History module taught in school influenced Athina's perception on the topic. Specifically, she (re)produced the idea of Turks as malicious occupiers, enslaving and slaughtering Greek people (Theodossopoulos, 2006). Moreover, she translated the historical revolutionary war of Greeks against the Turks as the symbol of an everlasting incongruence between the Muslim faith and Greek national belonging (ibid). These statements reflect perfectly what Chalari and Georgas (2016) noted about the effect exerted by Greek curricula and textbooks, namely the promotion of conservativism towards matters concerning religion or other cultures traditionally seen as 'enemies' and the subsequent reluctance towards understandings of Greece as a multicultural society.

The comments made by the participants in the first focus group in Northern Greece, further illuminated the perceived controversy of a Muslim flag bearer in a national commemoration parade (Tsimouris, 2008; Tzanelli, 2006). Valmira was the first one to comment upon the topic, mentioning 'concern' as the first thing that crossed her mind, when seeing the prompt. She was strongly opposed to the picture of the Muslim girl carrying the Greek flag as, to use her own words, this representation "somewhat taint[ed] the Greek cultural elements". This statement comes in complete accordance with the observation made by Kourti and Androussou (2013: 201), according to which xenophobia is promoted in Greece in the name of preserving the "authentic" national characteristics from "alien" influences':

> FG3
>
> Valmira: […] *burqa is not part of the Greek society. She has a different religion. Eh…I do not know how representative this picture is* [of Greece]. *That's it. For me, it's not about* [her] *country of origin* […] *It's about the different social and cultural elements the girl brings with her.*

The aforementioned comments are important as they show stereotypical understandings that are incompatible with multicultural competence, according to which a Muslim cannot be considered Greek. Stereotypes like that should be addressed in teacher training, if future teachers are to become multiculturally competent agents, promoting multicultural belonging and learning (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Hollins & Guzman, 2005). The boldest example of statements denoting attachment to national homogeneity was found in the first focus group conducted in Northern Greece, when discussing about the recent law providing second

generation migrants with access to citizenship. Relevant statements are worth mentioning and analysing, as they offer relevant information regarding strong beliefs about who is Greek and what the place of diversity within this conceptualisation is. Specifically, when participants were prompted to comment upon whether or not they agree with citizenship granting to second generation migrants, Tasia set of the conversation with the following:

> FG3
>
> Tasia: *I do not agree. Because, as I read somewhere on the internet, it is as if we're saying that because a mouse will be born in a stable, it will be a horse. It is not that because I will be born in Greece, it doesn't mean that I am Greek. I think it has to do* […] *eh, how can I put this, it has to do with your roots, that my grandfather, my great grandfather* […] *all of my family's history to be Greek.*

This statement is particularly strong and comes in total contrast with Tasia's indifferent attitude regarding the ethnoracial background of the student carrying the flag in parades during national commemoration celebrations expressed earlier on in the focus group discussion. Her opposition to the idea of citizenship granting was based on the fact that Greekness is a matter of descent and not territory, a popular idea among the Greek public (Dianeosis, 2018), as mentioned previously in chapter 2 (Section 2.3.1.). Victoria backed up this idea of the necessary Greek descent but combined it with national purity and diverse family upbringing, with parents in the role of cultural transmitters. Sophie backed up this idea of second-generation migrants being not Greek due to their diverse culture.

> FG3
>
> Victoria: […] *up until they get into Greek schooling, their parents will be the first influence, what they bring with them is going to be transmitted by the family, the* [diverse] *life experiences, everything.*
>
> Sophie: [Diverse] *culture.*
>
> Victoria: *I do not think we can say they are pure Greeks because they were born here.*
>
> Sophie: *Indeed.*

Victoria somewhat changed her initial strong opposition towards citizenship granting towards the end of the discussion by mentioning that second generation immigrants should have the right to access citizenship, only provided that they understand and respect the Greek nation.

In other words, respect was combined with compliance in a discourse that pointed towards the need of the 'other' to abide to the majority Greek cultural norm.

In her justification for not supporting the granting of citizenship, Sophie placed a lot of emphasis on perceived threat. Her comments seemed to support the idea of double-standards in the granting of rights to Greeks and non-Greek citizens, what Macris (2012: 304) describes as minority populations being considered as second-class citizens, 'marginalised in a "'democratic limbo', trapped in a zone of liminal legality – being kind of, but not really 'citizens'".

> FG3
>
> Sophie: [...] *if suddenly people from another country get Greek citizenship and they start having many rights in a country in which the majority is Greek, then* [Greek] *people will start feeling that they're losing ground. Because the foreign element has risen the last few years* [...] *If all these people suddenly start having equal rights with the Greeks...* (silence conveying that it would be an issue)

All in all, the above statements denote deeply-rooted stereotypical attitudes that pre-service teachers held about the distinct positionalities of natives and the 'others'. Such predispositions are counterproductive for facilitating multicultural education to promote new, more inclusive understandings of national belonging, thus incompatible with multicultural competence.

Valmira was the only one of the participants in this focus group that showed an initial positive stance towards including non-nationals through citizenship granting. She used her personal experience with the citizenship acquisition procedure, describing it as strenuous, time-consuming and costly. She acknowledged that citizenship granting is a relief for people that want to remain in the country, as it provides access to job and study opportunities. However, it gradually became clear that she advocated granting of citizenship only under the condition that the non-nationals would want to remain in the host country indefinitely. Her attachment to the criterion for the will to remain in the host country eventually revealed a false conceptualisation, equating the will to remain with a will to assimilate.

> FG3
>
> Valmira: [...] *if you aim at remaining here, I agree. But, this has to do with the family, as previously mentioned. If your family came here with the mind set of economic immigrants, to save some money and then go back* [...] *I would not*

> *want* [citizenship to be granted to them] *to be honest. Because* [in this case] *the issue of distortion of the* [Greek] *people, mores and customs comes up.* […] *Because if you want to remain here, this means you also want to make your family here and Greek citizenship, the Greek spirit and the nation are created, cultivated in you.* […] *Citizenship granting stands in opposition to what you previously showed us* (referring to the initial set of prompts). *Because, if you have Greek citizenship, you also support* [Greek] *cultural elements* (implying that the headscarf does not belong to those).

Valmira's comment is telling in showing how her idea of multicultural belonging is conditioned upon the need to promote a homogenous nation. In general, the discourse deployed by participants advocating for national homogeneity portrayed assimilation as the ideal inclusionary plan for culturally diverse individuals, according to which the host country mandates the normative expectations to which the newcomers should abide and identify with (Waldinger, 2015). In other words, value for diversity translated into tolerance of difference as long as this does not threaten the national 'we' (Mavroudi & Holt, 2015). This reveals a 'boxed' view of cultural identities as static, unchanged entities, which is opposed to notions of meaningful multicultural co-existence that multiculturally competent educators as advocates of social justice are supposed to promote. Under this framework, minority cultural identities are situated in opposition to the national one, generating a procedure of 'otherness'. This means that the dominant national identity, implicitly having a superior position, accommodates and tolerates differences rather than genuinely including them in the national 'we' (Joppke, 2004). So, although this approach is seemingly promoting the importance of cultural diversity, in reality it goes against the premises of multicultural competence, as it reinforces the ideals of 'mono-cultural' nationalism (Mavroudi & Holt, 2015) and 'nationalist intolerance' (Triandafyllidou & Kouki, 2013).

Statements pointing towards assimilationist practices as ideal for diversity integration within the educational setting were made by more participants than those initially expressing a negative stance towards multicultural inclusion in the general societal level. According to Battiste (2008) this should not be a surprise, as when ethnocentric-oriented educators encounter cultural difference, they have very little theory, scholarship, research, or tested practice to draw upon in order to engage it in learning in a way that is not assimilative. Participants unable to pinpoint and reflect upon the structures (re)producing monocultural discourses as well as understand how these have influenced their ideas towards diversity and belonging (Dervin, 2017; Nieto, 2000) were added to the participants expressing exclusionary

attitudes regarding multicultural integration in general, to form a majority that showed limited knowledge and skills in terms of initiating meaningful multicultural inclusion in education and promote social justice. Unfortunately, only a small minority of participants, who anyway held previous positive attitudes towards multicultural integration in general, offered a more encouraging picture regarding conceptualisations for facilitating multicultural integration in education.

The following excerpt presents an example to illustrate the difference in the ideas expressed by participants belonging to the two different categories outlined above. The question posed was related to how they, as teachers, could facilitate integration of students with a culturally diverse background present in their classroom. Natasa, who although claimed to be an advocate of 'interculturalism' in terms of diversity integration, to use her own term, showed signs of a monocultural approach to educational inclusion of cultural diversity. On the contrary, Theano, who had a lot of friends form a culturally diverse background and was aware of the 'othering' they were experiencing due to their differences, supported the need to promote multicultural understandings of belonging in education:

> FG1
>
> […]
>
> Natasa: *If we agree with some of their cultural elements, we could adjust them to ours.*
>
> Facilitator: *Only if we agree with them?*
>
> Natasa: *Yes.*
>
> Panos: *Only some elements? Why not all?*
>
> Natasa: *Because we're Greeks and we have our own identity.*
>
> Theano: *I think they should keep all their elements. The latter should be incorporated into our elements and keep on being* […] *I mean for the cultures not to mix up but to live together. For example, I should not mind that you are a Muslim and you should not mind that I am a Christian.*
>
> Anna: *In substance you mean to respect each other?*
>
> Theano: *To live together, not just to respect.*

The aforementioned example shows how Natasa, who previously showed her preference for the majority precedence, supported a conditional inclusion of background characteristics that

culturally diverse students bring with them, with selection being based on what does not deviate 'too much' from the Greek cultural norm. Once again, this logic follows the assimilationist approach promoted in substance by the relevant legislative initiatives implemented so far in Greece in terms of integrating culturally diverse populations (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011). On the contrary, Theano, who advocated for an inclusionary nation, in which individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds and natives "live [together] in diversity" (Antonsich & Matejskova, 2015: 496-497), was also an advocate of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), willing to get to know her culturally diverse students as individuals and adjust her teaching practice to their background in an attempt to facilitate their learning (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

The difference between the two mind sets was further illustrated in the discussion regarding the best strategy for diverse students' educational inclusion. Here, the idea of the majority precedence was expressed through a deficit approach of students with a culturally diverse background, who were portrayed mostly as lacking the necessary linguistic skills to 'fit in' the Greek classroom norm. This approach aligns with the logic historically promoted by the Greek initiatives implemented to accommodate culturally diverse students in the Greek educational system since the arrival of repatriated students in the early 1980s, viewing them as deficient, due to their diverse background, consequently prescribing remedial strategies to 'align' them with the Greek 'norm' (Damanakis, 1997). Students' prior experiences are deemed irrelevant if they do not match up with the Greek educational content and in general, assimilation to the Greek norm is the sole purpose of any special educational provisions put in place (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011).

A first example showing this difference in approaching the topic of culturally diverse students' educational integration is the following dialogue between Natasa and Anna:

> FG1
>
> Natasa: *Another way in which we could divide the kids is into advanced, intermediate and beginners. But…*
>
> Anna: *I think this is very racist.*
>
> Natasa: *Not in a racist way. I mean, according to their cognitive level* […]*, which would be judged by test.*
>
> Anna: *But why would you categorise them in this way? […]*

Natasa: *You are not going to explicitly tell this to the students, but you need to separate them.*

Anna: *But why?*

Natasa: *Because otherwise you're holding back the high achievers.* […] *I'm not saying these things out of nowhere, I've seen them* (i.e. the tests). *So, based on these tests, you send the kid, is it 7 years old? It lacks some knowledge? I will put it in Year 1. But because he has...his cognitive level is higher than his classroom, I mean compared to the 6-year-old, the 7-year-old will progress quicker. I might put it in Year 1 for some time but* […] *I will then take it back to Year 2.*

[…]

Anna: *I'm just going to ask a question: Have you considered what the psychology of this kid, when everyone in the classroom will know, let's say, 'oh, nice, you go and attend Year 1 for the 2 hours of Greek Language', will be?* […]

Natasa: *But it will have the same psychology lagging behind compared to his peers.*

Anna: *Yes, and this is why I'm telling you that as an educator you need to take some action.*

Natasa supported the exclusion of culturally diverse students from the regular classroom and their temporary placement in years below as the best strategy to enhance their learning, based on their cognitive ability as judged by standardised tests. This idea is probably inspired by the historical tradition of separating culturally diverse students in diverse classroom spaces (e.g. reception classes) as a means of assisting their learning in a more intensive way that can promote their integration to the 'mainstream' classroom space quicker. As becomes apparent, Natasa was an advocate of 'setting' (i.e. ability grouping), based on standardised tests, as a way to close the achievement gap between Greek and culturally-diverse students. However, a recent study explicitly mentions that "setting is incompatible with social justice approaches to education" (Archer et al., 2018: 119). Moreover, academics along with international policy makers have already noted that separating culturally diverse students in Greece in reception classes eliminates meaningful integration chances (Anagnostou & Nikolova, 2017; OECD, 2016b) and ends up with these students being caught up in the streaming system (Howden, 2017). International literature also reaches the same conclusions, pointing out that massive testing of students in content areas further discourages culturally diverse students and has little or no impact on their achievement (Berliner & Glass, 2014; Nieto, 2017). Her framing of culturally diverse students with low test scores as a problem hindering the learning of the high achievers is also worth noticing and could be translated as a discursive practice

(re)producing unequal power relations between the dominant native and marginalised culturally-diverse students. High achievers are more than likely used to denote Greeks, as Natasa, earlier on in the conversation, pointed out that according to studies she has looked at, culturally diverse students are not as good as their native peers.

Anna, who herself came from a culturally diverse background and mentioned during the discussion her experience with racism due to her cultural background when she was a student, disapproved this separation process and characterised it as 'racist', as she understood that this might lead to a causal relationship being established between diverse cultural background and low test-scores and achievement. Moreover, she pointed out the detrimental psychological effects that classroom exclusion could have on culturally diverse students experiencing a conditional belonging.

Natasa posited that exclusion was suggested as a benevolent solution, which would help the underachieving children overcome feelings of underestimation due to the unequal comparison with their peers. Anna's final comment aptly showed that tackling feelings of underestimation and making culturally diverse students an active and respectable part of the classroom are not resolved through classroom exclusion, but require the educator's agency, a point that seemed to be completely missed by Natasa's discourse. With a social justice orientation, Anna seemed to understand that the educator needs to act as an agent of change, tackling existing inequalities and avoiding 'easy solutions' in the attempt to adjust teaching practice to students' diversity (Pantić & Florian, 2015). Natasa, on the contrary, prioritised high achievers and was not willing to adjust her teaching to include culturally diverse students. Standardised test scores were for her the indicators of inclusion.

The disagreement between Natasa and Anna illuminated the difference that attachment to national homogeneity made for participants' multicultural competence. On the one hand, participants like Natasa, who were covertly or overtly attached to the idea of a homogenous nation, seemed to also be attached to the idea of a homogenous student body, defined by majority characteristics, like Greek language competence. For these participants, culturally diverse students were viewed as deficient and deviant from the 'normal student' profile, due to their poor Greek language skills, which did not allow them to keep up with the pace of learning taking place in regular classrooms. Unwilling to adjust their teaching practices and learning materials so that they could provide for the inclusion of students who struggle with

Greek language, pre-service teachers following this mindset considered exclusion of linguistically diverse students as the best solution. On the other hand, participants like Anna, who viewed diversity as a source of enrichment (Arslan, 2013) for the Greek educational classrooms and society and multiculturalism as an element that needs to become part of a redefined national 'we', understood that the role of educators is to make space for multiculturalism in the classroom, through including students with a culturally diverse background and adjusting their teaching practices so as to respond to all students' learning needs (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014).

In another similar discussion on culturally diverse students' inclusion, a participant previously supporting the idea of the majority precedence again supported the placement of culturally diverse students in years below compared to their age. Fellow participants with a more multicultural stance and an orientation to social justice, challenged this opinion, pointing out again at the negative psychological effects that this move would have on culturally diverse students and provided alternative solutions, this time based on including the latter in the classroom:

> FG5
>
> Athina: *If I had Year 6, and these kids* (referring to culturally diverse students) *were for Year 6 but they speak in broken Greek, I would not put them in Year 6 because, in my opinion, that would be me wasting them*[22]*.I would take them and put them - I might have accepted to have them in the after school programme, if they wanted to stay for me to help them- in Year 1, should I judge that these kids could not go to Year 2, where they would lag behind and where, in substance, the classroom teacher might not pay them enough attention. I would take them to the start, I would not put them in Year 6. No matter that they would have the same age with mine in Year 6. Because I think it's a bit bad to take them, with them not knowing even the very fundamental, the basics so as to build upon and thus lagging behind in everything.*
>
> […]
>
> Andrianna: *I would somewhat disagree with that because the student will again be wasted like that. Because, they* (i.e. the culturally diverse students) *see that all their classmates are younger so they automatically make the comparison. They say 'if I am in this classroom with younger kids than me, ...* (implying that they would think they are doing worse than their peers)*', they realise this. What I mean is that I think, let's say* […] *supportive tutoring would be better for these*

[22] Using the Greek word 'chantakono', literally meaning 'putting them in a ditch'.

kids, in which, if I'm right, there is a translator, too […]. [This would help] *so that specific modules could run in parallel, because they* (referring to culturally diverse students) *might need a special way to understand some things that Greek kids, for example, because Greek is their mother tongue, do not need so much.*

Pepi: […] *It would be better for me if a supportive programme run in the form of different corners, for example. What I mean is that, you know how we prepare specific programme/educational material for kids that have high level, low level and we work with different material in the classroom? Just like that to work with different material in different corners in the* [same] *classroom. Students will be in groups of 4, for example,* […] *based on their abilities and their particularities and work with diverse materials.*

In the previous excerpt, Athina claimed that she would favour putting culturally diverse students with limited Greek language capacity all the way back to Year 1, even if these students were 12 years old (i.e. Year 6). Her main argument is that these students would be wasted, if put in the classroom corresponding to their age group, as their understanding would be limited. Language was again the criterion of exclusion, a view traditionally promoted by the prevalence given to the Greek language by the ethnocentric Greek educational system (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015, 2016), and Athina considered the return to the very beginning to be the best strategy for culturally diverse students' educational inclusion. Andrianna was quick in pointing out that, by advocating for this move down, Athina completely misses out the detrimental psychological impact that this is going to have on culturally diverse students. More specifically, Andrianna posited that being surrounded by far younger peers, the latter are going to understand that they're considered as underachievers. Her alternative was the use of an in-classroom one-to-one assistance so that culturally diverse students will get the additional and specialised help they might need to understand what is going on in the classroom. This idea of collaboration with specialised personnel or other colleagues in order to assist culturally diverse students' learning was often brought up by the participants and resonates the second type of reception class lay-out outlined by the Ministerial Decision Φ10/20/Γ1/708 (1999), which took the form of individualised teaching assistantship, as outlined eralier in Chapter 2. In many occasions, the argument used for supporting this idea was the feeling of inadequate preparation the participants had in order to effectively address the learning needs of culturally diverse students on their own.

Pepi was the only exception expressing an idea of how she on her own would take care of culturally diverse students' inclusion in the classroom. Showing her agency to act towards

social justice (Kumashiro, 2015; Pantić & Florian, 2015), she suggested the development of diverse teaching material, suitable for all students present in the classroom and supported the establishment of group work. As she explained later on in the conversation, she envisaged ability-, subject-specific groups, with which she would work on her own, developing appropriate educational material. This idea forms a sign of a multiculturally competent educator, who would like to actively facilitate culturally diverse students' learning (Banks, 2001; Gay, 2010a, 2013; Joyce, Weil and Calhoun, 2009).

Instead of moving culturally diverse students years below, some participants supported the idea of an induction period, during which culturally diverse students would be permanently excluded from regular classrooms, receiving special instruction, focusing on Greek language learning, until their understanding was deemed appropriate for attendance in a regular classroom. In general, once again, the main issue raised related to the incorporation of culturally diverse students in regular classrooms was their command of the Greek language and supportive/tutorial classes were seen as a prerequisite for the creation of mixed-classrooms. This idea has probably been influenced by the provisions already in place for teaching students struggling with the Greek language. More specifically, as mentioned in Chapter 2, support and reception classes have already been in place since Law 2413/96 on intercultural education was introduced with the latter peaking in popularity recently, as the official provision for catering for the education of refugee students. All in all, participants seemed to follow the logic so far reproduced by the Greek educational policy for culturally diverse students in place, according to which educational initiatives for these students have a place outside the regular classroom context and are mainly comprised of the teaching of Greek as a second language in reception or support classes (Mitakidou & Daniilidou, 2007; Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003; Tsimouris, 2008).

> FG4
>
> Giouli: *Can I say something? You have a new student who is not a refugee and its age group corresponds to Year 4 of Primary School. This kid however does not have the appropriate education for this level. So, he has to pass through another process beforehand.*
>
> Toula: *How do you reach the conclusion that the kid does not have the education corresponding to Year 4? Do you mean…*
>
> Giouli: *I mean* [it does not have the appropriate education] *to enter the Greek school. It's impossible for a kid that doesn't speak Greek at all.*

Jimis: *Are you talking languagewise?*

Giouli: *Languagewise, yes, it's impossible to put it in Year 4. You have to put it below* […] *Yes, I mean* [you can't put it in Year 4] *because its age is for a Year 4 level. It needs to pass from a* [special] *educational provision for 1-2 years, something, so that it can be incorporated in a regular classroom.*

It was clear that, for Giouli, inclusion of culturally diverse students in regular classrooms was conditional on their Greek language command. Her discourse about the need for intensive courses in separate classroom spaces hinted an assimilative mentality. Her assimilative mind set came up also in another instance, when she expressed fear of losing oneself in the quest of accommodating diversity. The attachment to the rigid boundary of Greek language command as an inclusion criterion was a manifestation of the majority precedence, showing how participants perceived the inclusion process to be unidirectional; culturally diverse students need to reach our language standards and until that happens, they will be excluded from regular classroom environments. As becomes clear, this logic further exacerbates the distinction between us and them and promotes a logic of separation between Greek and culturally diverse students.

If culturally diverse students were not envisaged as permanently excluded during this induction period, they were only imagined to be an active part of the regular classroom during the teaching of what were considered to be modules of lesser importance, like Arts, Music, Drama, Physical Education and Flexible Zone[23]. This conceptualisation seems to be influenced once again by the provisions in place put forward by the Ministerial Decision Φ10/20/Γ1/708 (1999) for the organisation of reception classes for migrant students, according to which the latter should be merged with the 'mainstream' classroom only for Physical Education, Music and foreign languages courses. The following excerpt presents this view as expressed by Efstathia and Maria as well as how this was challenged by the reflexive and diversity-sensitive Lia:

FG2

Efstathia: *For example, for the refugee kids that came now and were in some schools: since they don't know the language, they cannot be in the same*

[23] This term refers to three teaching hours per week that have no subject-specific content and can be devoted to any activity.

classroom with the Greek kids, who have progressed, know the language, have some additional knowledge. I believe that, to start with, there need to be some courses, like they run now, that would help the kids learn some basics, I mean how to speak and how to write the language and after [completing] *them, they* [i.e. culturally diverse students] *will be included in the classrooms, like normal students, so that they could progress along the Greek students.* […] *These* (referring to the preparatory courses) *might even last a year* […]

Lia: *I do not know if I agree 100%. I will agree that when you don't have a good language command, it's hard to be included in a classroom. But, on the other hand, I think that, based on the preparatory teaching they receive, I mean the 3-4 hours they attend after (the regular school rota is finished), it would be good to be included in the classroom so that they can start learning to think in the (new) language they are learning.* […] *After 1-2 months, I think they should be included and keep on receiving the after* [school support] *of course.* […]

Maria: *That gave me the idea that for example, Greek Language and Maths could be taught in separate classrooms, but in subjects like PE, Arts, Flexible Zone, children could be united* […]

Efstathia: *The way Maria put it, I agree, too. In these subjects that don't have such…. That they can do handcrafts, games, what I mean is that they don't have that much verbal communication, they* [i.e. the culturally diverse students] *can do hand signs, when they want to communicate. Where the topic is not so linguistic, this could happen.*

Lia: *I just don't think that there's harm in them being included in Greek Language, too. Worst case scenario, they will gain nothing from that. Best case scenario, they will gain something. I think it's good for them to gain contact.* […] *They will familiarise themselves more with the language* […] *they will be included in the classroom* […] *they will form part of this classroom, part of this team, because a classroom is a team.*

Efstathia: *What she's saying.* [In this way] *the rest of the kids* [i.e. the Greeks] *would familiarise themselves with the way the look. Because all they hear now is let's say 'the refugees' and they have them in their minds much differently than what they might be. They could be friends* […] *They will familiarise with each other.*

In this excerpt, Efstathia kick started the discussion by explaining how students with poor language command should be excluded from the classroom to receive preparatory courses for up to two years, so that they can learn to speak and write in Greek. In disagreement with the model of total exclusion, Lia initially proposed a mixed model of after-school language support courses and inclusion in the regular, day classrooms. This proposition was picked up by Maria and Efstathia and interpreted as a potential solution for fragmentary inclusion of culturally diverse students during modules of 'lesser importance', like Arts and Crafts, an

idea endorsed by various participants from other focus group discussions in the present study. Lia came back to make clear that in her opinion, culturally diverse students should be included in all modules in regular classrooms as soon as possible, as this would be beneficial to them. Not only would they familiarise themselves with the language, but they would also feel better psychologically, starting to experience group membership. This argument made Efi temporarily even her stance, admitting the benefits of coexistence, placing an emphasis on native students and their familiarisation with the perceived 'alien'.

Apart from the best strategy for culturally diverse students' educational inclusion, another topic that revealed discourse hinting towards limited accommodation of diversity was that of mother tongue/heritage language retention. This is important as positive attitudes in dealing with students' native/heritage language have previously been identified as playing a core role in teachers' multicultural competence (Nieto & Bode, 2011). More specifically, on a question asking participants if culturally diverse students should be encouraged to speak their mother tongue/heritage language, the initial reaction in most cases was negative, as far as the educational setting was concerned. This stance shows that, instead of supporting the right of linguistic minority students to be taught their languages (European Commission, 2004), participants (re)produce the monolingual premises upon which the Greek educational system has been operating and for which it has been criticised (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015, 2016). Although as revealed later, participants were not opposed to mother tongue/heritage language retention, they perceived this to be a private issue, having a place only in informal settings, like playtime or in private chats within the group of friends and family, and not in the space of public formal education (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015, 2016; Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011). This logic aligns perfectly with the underlying principal of the Greek policy initiatives, which only envisage the retention of culturally diverse groups' linguistic and cultural heritage outside the formal educational space (Maniatis, 2012):

> FG3
>
> Victoria: *I think that in the, if there is a mixed classroom, he* [i.e. the student] *could not speak, what can I say, what would he speak, Turkish, for example. I don't know.*
>
> Valmira: *They usually do though the little ones. I mean even now if you see when they're playing.*
>
> Victoria: *No though, neither should you tell him to forget it nor can you tell him 'you will speak this'.*

[…]

Valmira: *Eh, I simply think it has to do with developing the kid's ability to differentiate where to use each communication code. So, for it to know that when I, when I go to school, this is what my parents told me, when we go to school, we don't speak the Albanian language, because it's bad when you speak a language that the other person doesn't understand.* […] *For example, now we speak Greek, we are at school, we are in the classroom. You can't encourage it to speak the other language because this happens already at home. Usually at home, most families speak the mother tongue so that it won't be forgotten because they have taken into consideration the role of school, that I don't send my child in an Albanian school to learn the Albanian language. I send it to the Greek school. It will speak with its classmates* [in its mother tongue]*, but the educator will not prioritise yours* [i.e. your mother tongue].

Both participants thought that language diversity had no place in formal educational settings, although they posited that native/heritage language should not be completely eradicated. However, they seemed to agree that it is not the educator's responsibility to encourage mother tongue/heritage language retention. From both participants' comments became clear that, according to them, the paramount role of the Greek school is to teach culturally diverse students the Greek language. This finding corroborates previous ones found by Gkaintartzi and her collaborators (2015) while examining Greek in-service teachers, according to which, although most teachers endorse positive attitudes towards bilingualism and the maintenance of students' mother/heritage language, they consider the latter as an exclusive right and responsibility of community groups, not related to school language learning (Skourtou et al., 2004). In other words, participants discursively reproduced attitudes towards bilingualism influenced by the current dominant monolingual language ideology present in Greece (Gkaintartzi et al., 2016), which make issues of bilingualism "invisible" within the Greek classrooms (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015). Showing no willingness to "unlearn monolingualism" through actively challenging its dominance in the education space (Scarino, 2014), is another sign of these students' attachment to national homogeneity and their lack of social justice orientation. Valmira, digging into her past personal experience as a linguistically diverse student, stated that mother tongue/heritage language retention is a strictly private issue that lies with the family. Moreover, she advocated that linguistically diverse students need to learn the appropriate spatial context for each language, like she did from her parents. In her understanding, classroom was a Greek-language space only and, within the school setting, diverse languages could only be used during playtime or when communicating with friends that speak the same language. It is quite surprising that Valmira, having Albanian as her

mother tongue, took the stance that the educator should not encourage the development of mother tongue and that she supported that immigrant parents choose to send their kids to Greek schools because they want their kids to learn the Greek language. She did not seem to consider the possibility that this happens because they do not have the choice to send them in bilingual schools, for example, or because of the stigmatisation of heritage languages in the Greek society (Gkaintartzi et al., 2016) or the lack of institutional support for the teaching of heritage languages in Greek schools (Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011; Kiliari, 2005).

In general, the majority of participants seemed to ignore the additive, instrumental value of mother tongue/heritage language retention in additional language learning (Al-Harbi, 2010; Churchill, 2003; Seals & Peyton, 2016). This became more evident when participants were given the hypothetical scenario of them being teachers asked by the parents of linguistically diverse students on how the latter should handle the issue of bilingualism. The following excerpts present some sample responses:

> FG6
>
> Maria: *I would encourage the parents to speak* [Greek] *as much as they can even if they are speaking it wrong. Try to speak Greek,* [so that] *the kid can hear Greek.*
>
> Facilitator: *And with the other language?*
>
> Maria: *With the other language? Surely to speak* [it]. *The ideal, let's say, I would suggest that one parent speaks solely Greek and the other solely the other language to the kid so that the kid could speak both languages.*
>
> […]
>
> Evi: *I think I would disagree with that because…eh…I mainly think that the child would be very confused in that case. Eh, however, nothing pops to my mind at the minute as an encouragement for the parents. For sure, for the kid to hear Greek, will of course be very good both for its scholastic achievement and in general, if it is to remain in this country, it will surely be very good to hear Greek. Eh…now, the parent, yes, I think, should help in that way.*
>
> […]
>
> Kaiti: *I believe that… to not learn just the language of the country, to not hear and speak only the language of the country in which it resides. To not lose the mother tongue.* […] *Yes, so, obviously, in the society, the school and the likes, it will hear the one language. In the family, elements of the other should be introduced.*

> Renia: […] *in my house for example, at home, my parents always told me 'we will speak only Greek' so that we learn from there the mother tongue and all good. Aside of that, since I was in Germany, eh, from the TV,* […]*, the neighbourhood, that everyone spoke German only, eh, there was no chance I could not find a way to communicate somehow.* […] *In my early years, I knew Greek better. Slowly as years passed, since I attended German lessons in the Greek school too and I then went to a frontistirio*[24] *to get a German degree, so through all these processes, I started learning the German language very well too. Consequently, I think that these two can be combined and be learnt both very well.*

Maria, Kaiti and Evi seemed to misunderstand the role of mother tongue/heritage language retention on second language learning. Previously in the discussion, the first two girls seemed unsure, if not confused, about what happens with kids that are exposed to two languages since a young age in terms of language development. Maria went as far as saying that they never achieve excellent command in any of the two languages whereas Kaiti said that they are delayed on both languages' acquisition compared to their peers, arguments that go against the research findings and theory regarding the beneficial role of bilingualism (Parodi, 2015). Evi admitted at the end of the discussion that she had never thought about mother tongue/heritage language retention as something that would concern her as a future educator. Maria seemed to completely miss the advantages of mother tongue/heritage language retention for the second language acquisition (Al-Harbi, 2010; Churchill, 2003; Seals & Peyton, 2016) and said that she would encourage parents to speak in Greek, based on the argument that bigger exposure to the Greek language would help the kid acquire the language quicker. However, she also seemed to support mother tongue/heritage language retention, offering the scenario of ascribing a language to each parent as a means of addressing the child. Evi thought that this mixed-language concept would be confusing but had no alternative to offer apart from parents speaking in Greek. Kaiti challenged this proposition by saying that since the kid is exposed to the Greek language in all other instances of its life, familial space should not be used for that purpose. Instead, this space should retain and encourage mother tongue/heritage language learning. Kaiti's comment echoed previous research findings, according to which, retaining mother tongue/heritage language at home has beneficial effects and should be strongly encouraged (Danjo, 2018).

[24] Referring to an after-school, private centre for language learning.

Renia came to corroborate the point made regarding the importance of the use of familial space for mother tongue/heritage language learning by bringing up her personal experience with learning Greek through speaking with her family at home, when she lived in Germany. Moreover, she also corroborated that speaking the heritage language at home did not stop her from mastering German, which she learnt through attending a Greek school in Germany, offering German language courses and by attending private German language lessons in a language centre.

To sum up, participants seemed to be generally unprepared to accommodate linguistic diversity within the educational setting and to provide advice on mother tongue/heritage language retention. This finding is particularly important for the educational context of Greece, which has been severely criticised for its monocultural and monolingual orientation (Gkaintartzi et al., 2016), as it shows that future educators are not equipped with multicultural knowledge and skills on how to challenge this shortcoming and define a new multicultural education space (Gkaintartzi et al., 2016), which respects and provides for the linguistic diversity that students from a culturally diverse background might bring with them (Nieto & Bode, 2011). As Basu (2011) aptly argued, multilingualism in public education space can be perceived as a practice facilitating multicultural integration.

5.3. Experience of Diversity-Related Training: The Gap between Theory and Practice

All focus group participants claimed to have received some diversity-related training during their studies. However, the vast majority had attended just one mandatory module on the topic. Like previous studies (Guo et al., 2009), in general, participants expressed the view that diversity-related modules form a marginal part of their teacher training studies. Multicultural components were not consistently present throughout the departmental curriculum (Ambe, 2006; Lanas, 2014; Tarozzi, 2014). Multiculturalism was pushed to the margins of the teacher training curriculum and was studied out of context (Florio-Ruane, 2001). Thus, participants pointed out that the departmental curriculum per se did not prompt them to consider this aspect as important for their teacher training and it was up to the students' personal interest whether or not they would focus on the topic.

Banks (2008: 117) posits that effective teacher training is "essential for the successful implementation of multicultural education in the schools". In general, there were just a few

participants that had chosen to take any optional diversity-related modules offered but regardless of the amount, status or content of the modules attended, participants agreed that they did not feel sufficiently prepared to effectively address multicultural classrooms. The feeling of insufficient preparedness for teaching in multicultural classrooms has previously been reported in other studies examining pre-service teachers (Benton-Borghi & Chang, 2012; Bhopal, Harris & Rhamie, 2009; Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002; Guo et al., 2009). The following quotes illustrate why participants felt this way:

FG2

Facilitator: *I understand that you liked the mandatory module but there is a 'but'.*

Maria: *It was very early on, I believe. So, in the first year.*

Efstathia: *Year 1, Semester 1.*

Maria: *You barely know what the topics discussed are.*

[…]

Lia: […] *you don't know what's on offer throughout your studies. So, 'bang', to do that, I think you do not achieve the maximum you could achieve in Year 3, that we have seen some things, that we have been into a classroom* [for practicum].

[…]

Maria: *I do not remember now something that I can say 'I'm gonna go into a school and implement what I learnt* [back] *then'. Maybe because it* [i.e. the 'Intercultural Education' module] *was* [offered] *too early on. So, I couldn't think in Semester 1 that what I would implement what I was learning then.*

Efstathia: *Because indeed neither had we been into classrooms* [for a placement] *nor did we know how teaching is done.*

The feeling of unpreparedness reported by the participants had partly to do with the fact that mandatory diversity-related modules are offered in the very beginning of the teacher training studies, far away from the teaching practice experience, which, best case scenario, starts in Year 3. Apart from the modules being separate from the teaching practice experience, participants also mentioned the modules were too theoretical, with no opportunity provided to implement what was learnt in practice:

FG6

Evi: *Personally, the modules I selected or had as mandatory in university, indeed provided very strong bases* […] *In substance, through the modules I learnt theoretically what interculturalism is, what needs to be done in such occasions, how you need to address these kids. Indeed, theory was very good in university* [modules]. *However, personally, in school even, I did not have a* [student] *case from another country so, it was not necessarily needed to me. I think that the theory, which we have got from university, is very good. I have not yet put it into practice. Of course, I do not even know if it* [i.e. theory] *will be the same in practice in a classroom. Because,* […] *in general, theory and practice have been totally different. Eh, consequently, I don't know if the theory that we've learnt about interculturalism and these kids, if it is going to be the same, when we are going to be in a classroom.*

Tina: *I will agree with the* [previous] *statement because, although I have been assisted a lot from a lot of modules that I have selected in the department, because there are mandatory interculturalism modules but most of them are, unfortunately, optional, so it's at each student's disposal, if he/she will select them or not* […] *As Evi said, theory stands a bit away from practice and maybe the practical bit, because I also did not have, I was not given classrooms with culturally diverse students, maybe this bit needs deepening, for us to get involved in the process of been given such classrooms so as to gradually gain experience in this bit.*

Evi and Tina make it clear that although they felt they gained a lot of knowledge on diversity management from the modules they attended, they could not claim that they were adequately prepared to successfully address diversity in a classroom setting, as they had no experience of practical implementation (Guo et al., 2009; Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014). Moreover, based on their general experience from learning theories on educational practices, they were aware that theory is different to practice. So, having no practicals as part of the diversity-related modules attended and having had a teaching practice experience in perceived homogenous classrooms, they were not sure if the knowledge they acquired would be applicable in a real-life context.

These points echo previous literature on the topic according to which teacher preparation programs falsely offer stand-alone diversity-related modules, far removed from teaching field experiences where multicultural competence actually needs to be enacted (Able, Ghulamani, Mallous, & Glazier, 2014). Participants' narratives make the theory-practice gap evident in terms of their diversity-related training (Guo et al., 2009; Cochran-Smith et al., 2016), hinting towards the need for incorporating multicultural service-learning provisions that combine theory and practice (Sleeter, 2001) as a way to better prepare future teachers for multicultural classrooms.

Placing pre-service teachers in diverse fieldwork settings has been identified as a way of providing them with multicultural experiences that they previously lacked (Still & Squires, 2015). In relation to that, Tina pinpoints the need for the incorporation of multicultural field experiences in the teacher training curricula, so that pre-service teachers will start gaining experience on this domain. As reported by Bhopal and Rhamie (2014: 318) in their findings, pre-service teachers claim that, if they are placed in classrooms comprised predominantly of ethnoculturally diverse students, they are "forced to think about diversity, multiculturalism and how their teaching would affect students who may be different to the 'norm'". Accordingly, the need for multicultural field experiences, either in formal (e.g. refugee reception classes) or informal (e.g. voluntary organisations facilitating refugee/immigrant integration) educational settings, was brought up by participants in all focus group discussions as a means to enhance multicultural competence, following previous relevant claims made in the academic literature (Benton-Borghi & Chang, 2012; Delano-Oriaran, 2012).

Andrianna in the following quote presented another aspect of why the diversity-related modules offered fail in successfully preparing multiculturally competent future educators:

> FG5
>
> Andrianna: *I think we remain too much focused, as Malena pointed out, on learning the terminology but in practice, let's say, the way we had weekly seminars during our teaching practicum that gave us the chance to discuss 'I have this problem, how can I address it?', 'Like this', there was no equivalent opportunity during our diversity-related courses for us to discuss on real-life classroom situations and how these can be addressed.*

Andrianna went one step further, identifying what created the gap between theory and practice in diversity-related modules: the lack of problem-solving discussions applied to real-life situations that might be faced by future teachers in multicultural classrooms. Her comment about the need to reflect on challenges faced by educators in multicultural classrooms echoes the work of researchers emphasizing the importance of meaningful diversity-related courses that engage student teachers in self-reflection (Castro, 2010; Bodur, 2012; He & Cooper, 2009) rather than relying on the mere acquisition of abstract knowledge about diversity (Acquah & Commins, 2013; Hachfeld et al., 2015; Pohan, 1996; Sleeter, 1994; Sperandio et al., 2010). In general, participants repeatedly mentioned the importance of the diversity-related modules' content and delivery methods (Acquah & Commins, 2017) and

named bad and good examples, helping in identifying aspects that where considered to strengthen or hinder meaningful multicultural learning. On the one hand, modules placed at the very beginning of the teacher training studies, having an introductory nature, solely focusing on theory and having a final exam as the only means of student assessment were criticised and, in some cases, brought up as paradigmatic examples for non-attendance or uselessness. On the other hand, the use of real-life examples to encourage discussion and reflection, research conduction, critical thinking encouragement and the provision of educational practices that could be implemented in multicultural classrooms were all named as good examples of thought-provoking and successful diversity-related training.

Apart from the lack of diversity modules combining theory with practice, participants in most instances also claimed that they had no opportunity to gain or implement multicultural skills during their teaching practice experience either. Based on the participants' comments, this seems to be based on the fact that diversity and multicultural education implementation did not form an integral part of the teaching practice experience the participants had to undertake in partial fulfilment of their undergraduate degree:

> FG1
>
> Facilitator: *So, this* [i.e. multicultural competence] *does not form a part of the teaching practicum?*
>
> Unanimously: *No.*
>
> Panos: *No, and it would be nice* [if it did], *I believe.*
>
> Natasa, Anna and Theano: *No, and they don't even highlight this to us.*
>
> Facilitator: *Neither as an evaluation* [criterion]*?*
>
> Unanimously: *No, nothing, nothing, nor they highlight it to us.*

Participants stated that all agents involved in the organisation of the teaching practice experience disregard multicultural competence. They felt that neither the academic personnel in charge of the practicum nor the leading classroom teachers highlight the importance of multicultural competence. Thus, the hidden message conveyed is that, although diversity-related modules are offered in the teacher training curriculum, they are only of theoretical importance and their practical implementation is not necessary.

Another reason pointed out for the gap between multicultural competence and the teacher training experience was the minimal number of students with a culturally diverse background present in the classrooms pre-service teachers were placed in during their teaching practicum:

> FG5
>
> Malena: *I think that I have not been appropriately equipped to address a multicultural classroom. I mean, ok, I learnt it, I learnt the theoretical terms and the educational practices, because some courses included some educational practices, but I think that since I did not... I have not done any teaching practice on that, in the school that I was placed there was nothing relevant, so I do not know how to deal with it.*
>
> […]
>
> Athina: […] *In terms of the teaching practicum, I did not have anything* [relevant] *as well, I mean, since I am labelling, everyone* [i.e. all students] *was from Greece, I did not have anyone, let's say, not even from Albania, that is more frequent because we are neighbouring countries and we have a lot of Albanian inhabitants. Everyone was from Greece. As such, this course* [i.e. Intercultural Education] *was gone like this, because it did not touch my teaching practice.*

Malena tried to navigate through the contradictory relationship between multicultural knowledge as part of diversity-related modules and the absence of multicultural teaching implementation from the teaching practicum. She points out how the modules she attended provided her with theoretical knowledge. However, her main point is that she never had the chance to implement all she learnt in her teaching practical placement. Along the same lines, Athina's comment about Albanian students and inhabitants in Greece exposed her knowledge basis in the background of the history of immigration to Greece and how this is reflected by today's student population. However, Athina seemed to have a skewed understanding of multicultural competence. More specifically, some of her comments revealed that she understood multicultural competence as the educator's ability to speak the languages of the linguistically diverse students present in the classroom. Her discourse echoed an understanding of multicultural competence as mastering every single culture, mentioned previously in the study of Guo and his collaborators (2009). According to the latter study, such an understanding hints towards "a difficulty to 'reach all of the cultures'" but also "reveals white resistance to the responsibility of responding to diversity" (ibid: 8). Athina's discourse indeed revealed a resistance to adjustments for accommodating diversity in education. More specifically, it seemed like some ethnocentric attitudes she endorsed, restricted her diversity sensitivity. For example, her reflexive response was that multicultural

education only concerns non-Greek students. Based on that, in the aforementioned quote, she criticised her teaching practicum environment as homogenous, providing her with no chance to see the practical value of the 'Intercultural Education' module she attended during her studies. This attitude was endorsed by a lot of participants, who defended their lack of practical skills in implementing multicultural education in the perceived homogeneity that was prevalent among the students of the classrooms they were placed in during their teaching practicum. This attitude, according to which the relevance and usefulness of multicultural education and addressing diversity is dependent on the type and mix of the school classrooms has also been expressed by pre-service teachers in previous studies (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014).

The leading classroom teachers were presented as another factor determining the multicultural relevance of the teaching practice experience (Guo et al., 2009). The following quote by Evi illustrates the great influence that the leading classroom teacher has on the student-teachers' multicultural competence practical experience, by contrasting the multiculturally competent leading classroom teacher, with whom she collaborated on her first practice, to the strictly-curriculum-abided one in her second:

> FG6
>
> Evi: […] *For example, in the first level* [i.e. the first teaching practicum] *that I had Year 6, eh, the* [leading classroom] *teacher encouraged me to talk about refugees that I had the intention and as a matter of fact, because it happened that we did a text from the* [text] *anthology, we discuss about that topic. So, I mean, there was no kid from another country* [present but] *we talked about multiculturalism. Of course, using easier words, easier terms. In the second class however, that I had Year 3, I could not deviate from what the teacher dictated me that I needed to do. So, even when the topic followed a slightly different direction, that you could [take, because] the kids want to sometimes deviate a bit from the* [text]*book, for example, you needed to stop because you needed to do what she had shown you to.*

Evi's first teacher understood that it is important to discuss current social topics with the students. He also seemed to understand and value the benefits of multicultural education for native students. He thus encouraged Evi to discuss with her students about the refugees' presence in Greece, even though there was no refugee student in the classroom. Evi, who already wanted to do so, seized the chance and using a literature anthology text as a trigger, opened up the topic for discussion on a classroom level (Au, 2017). She thus had the

opportunity to implement multicultural education in practice. Similar instances were described by other participants who had the chance to collaborate with multiculturally competent leading classroom teachers. Unfortunately, though, most participants experienced classroom teachers like the second one described by Evi. For these teachers, subject-specific curricula and textbooks formed the utmost authorities the student-teachers needed to abide to. In these cases, curriculum was brought up as a pressure factor for content coverage and adherence to timetables (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Adler, 2008), thus preventing educators from effectively implementing multicultural education (De La Mare, 2014).

In some other instances, leading classroom teachers were just framed to be indifferent if not discouraging towards multicultural competence (Neuharth-Pritchett et al., 2001). Maria's following quote illustrates how her classroom teacher was not a good role-model for her, not encouraging her to practically implement multicultural education, although there was direct need for that:

> FG6
>
> Maria: *Eh, ok,* [in my teaching practicum] *I had some small experience* […]. *It was an Albanian kid, which although was in the same cognitive level with the rest* [of the kids]*, faced difficulties because it was shy talking, it knew only now to say the basics because it had arrived* [when he was already] *old, so he had not resided in Greece for years and could only say the basics 'how are you?' and the rest and even those in broken* [Greek].
>
> Facilitator: *Do you think you implemented something from what you learnt* [through your modules] *in your teaching practice with this kid?*
>
> Maria: *No, I was not able to implement anything.* […] *The classroom teacher did not encourage me and... this particular educator wanted us to follow a certain pace,* [wanted me] *to do certain things, to teach certain things, I did not have the freedom.*

Maria was restricted in what she could and could not do during her teaching practicum as, during their placement, student teachers are required to collaborate directly with and follow the instructions given by the leading classroom teacher. Leading teachers' inflexibility has previously been mentioned as a hindrance for multicultural education implementation by pre-service teachers (Mysore et al., 2006). In Maria's occasion, the leading teacher did not seem to pay any attention to his student struggling with language and also did not give Maria the chance to do something about it, as he asked her to follow a pre-determined teaching plan, designed by him. It is thus clear that this teacher did not form a great role-model in terms of

addressing diversity in a classroom setting. A lot of other participants mentioned similar experiences with their leading teachers lacking in multicultural competence.

It is indicative how some participants, based on their observation of the classrooms' leading teachers during the practicum, went as far as reproducing the claim of 'not enough time' for multicultural competence implementation. Insufficient timing and subject-specific priorities are often used by opponents of equity and social justice education to claim that implementing multicultural practices is an additional burden to the educators' heavy workload (November, 2017). The following quote is indicative of that discourse. When prompted to discuss upon whether or not they experienced implementation of practices promoting diversity during their teaching placements, Tasia and Litsa both responded negatively and brought up their leading teachers' stance:

> FG3
>
> Tasia: *It* [i.e. my teaching practicum] *did not have anything* [relevant]. *In my classroom, for example, the leading teacher cared more about covering the content of the subject-specific curriculum than anything else. So, he did not do Arts and Music to do Maths.*
>
> Litsa: *Mine too.*
>
> Tasia: *So that the man would be able to finish.* [And we are talking about] *dealing with issues of multiculturalism on top of that? Not even a little bit!*

The previous excerpt makes the importance of hidden curricula apparent. Based on their observation of the leading classroom teacher, the message Tasia and Litsa received was that priority needs to be given to literacy and numeracy skills and that multicultural education can only come in place if time allows for it. Thus, multicultural competence was deemed irrelevant since it has no applicability in the classroom. This illustrates previous research findings showing Greek pre-service teachers' experience of the limited applicability of diversity-related curriculum areas in everyday teaching practice during their placements (Kourti & Androussou, 2013). Being exposed to this practice, pre-service teachers express doubts about, if not resist, the usefulness of the knowledge acquired from diversity-related modules in their practicum (ibid). All in all, the majority of participants' narratives in the present study showed that pre-service teachers cannot aspire to their cooperating teachers as role models for embracing multicultural perspectives and utilise multicultural teaching practices, echoing previous findings (ibid; Garcia & Pugh, 1992). It is thus important to

ensure that the leading classroom-teachers, who pre-service teachers are called to observe and work with during their placements, implement multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogies. In other words, leading teachers are important educational agents and should work as positive role-models for pre-service teachers, putting multicultural competence into practice on a daily basis (Benton-Borghi & Chang, 2012; Delano-Oriaran, 2012; Still & Squires, 2015). So, more emphasis needs to be paid in bridging the gap between theory and practice in multicultural competence development, taking a closer look at the content and the quality of diversity-related experiences provided during teacher training.

As Dervin and Hahl (2015) put it, it is important to examine what incidents related to the implementation of multicultural education students report from their teaching practicum and this is what this last section did so far. I would argue thought that it is also important to examine things that student teachers did not do in their practicum and how they reflect on them. This is exactly what Toula, one of the participants, did in her concluding remark during the focus group discussion she participated in. Specifically, Toula reflected on her experience of teaching practice and how multicultural competence could make it better. Hahl and Löfström (2016) aptly say that future teachers can be positive change agents in schools, encouraging acceptance and appreciation of diversity, only if they have first learnt to critically and honestly reflect on their own discourse, behaviour and practice (see also Cochran-Smith, 1995; Sue, 2011). Toula's comment regarding the additive value that multicultural competence implementation could bring to the teaching practice experience and learning of all students is an indicative example illustrating that point:

> FG4
>
> Toula: *I think it* [i.e. my university experience] *made me understand that we need to pay attention to seemingly minor differences, when it doesn't necessarily look like there's an issue but the situation is actually important. For example, I might have not understood something about Kostas that might have been important to him. Maybe if I had implemented a multicultural approach, I might have achieved more for him and the rest of the classroom. In general, I did not do it* [i.e. implement multicultural education] *and I think I should have done it.*

Toula identified her shortcoming of not implementing multicultural education during her practicum and showed elements of multicultural competence through reflecting on the fact that this might have made her miss out on making learning more relevant to her Roma student, Kostas. She had previously mentioned that Kostas was not a high achieving student,

and she identified that, one reason for which this might have happened is the fact that she did not take into consideration his background in order to make her teaching more appealing to him, more culturally relevant. So, to conclude this section, it is imperative that pre-service teachers gain both theoretical but most importantly practical knowledge on how to implement multicultural education using their students' background during their teacher training studies. As Gundara and Sharma (2010) put it, the constructive use of the prior knowledge that diverse students bring with them in order to make the curriculum content relevant to them is one of the main challenges faced by contemporary educators. Multiculturally competent teachers should "use knowledge of their students' culture and ethnicity as a framework for inquiry as they organise and implement instruction" (Banks et al., 2001: 198). In other words, multiculturally competent educators should be capable of adjusting the learning environment and content to the personal background and needs of each student as a way to further engage all students in learning (Gay, 2002, 2010a; Frye et al., 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2001).

To conclude, this chapter presented the qualitative analysis of the data collected through the focus group discussions with pre-service teachers. Firstly, participants' voices and experiences provided insights into the various understandings present among pre-service teachers' regarding the practical manifestations of multicultural competence (Guo et al., 2009), highlighting a lack in applied multicultural teaching skills and knowledge. Moreover, participants' narratives shed light into how the relationship between attachment to national homogeneity and multicultural competence identified through the quantitative analysis of the present study played out discursively, with participants favouring the former (re)producing exclusionary visions regarding diversity inclusion both in the societal and classroom level.

Individuals showing attachment to national homogeneity failed to show evidence of multicultural competence in their narratives as they tended to advocate for the precedence of the dominant culture in expense of the inclusion of cultural diversity and seemed to view individuals with a culturally diverse background through a deficit lens. Participants attached to the idea of a homogenous nation were reluctant, if not negative, to changing representations of 'Greekness' to include the diversity currently present across the Greek society, for example through having a Muslim girl carrying the Greek flag in a national commemoration parade. They were also sceptical, if not opposed, to the idea of initiating meaningful changes to the educational curricula so that their contents would be infused with multicultural perspectives, specifically in regards to the subject content of History and

Religious Education. Moreover, they placed all the burden of inclusion in the Greek educational system to the shoulders of culturally diverse students, not considering adjustments of the teaching strategies and learning materials currently in place as their way to facilitate this process. In other words, pre-service teachers endorsing ideas of national homogeneity failed to see how they could initiate the inclusion of multicultural perspectives in their teaching practices and assist in culturally diverse students' learning. They viewed students form a culturally diverse background as deficient and in need of reaching the student standards of the educational "mainstream" (Currie, 2006), placing a special emphasis on the need for them to learn the Greek language. Specifically, students with a culturally diverse background facing difficulties with the Greek language were envisaged as being excluded from the regular classroom, until they reached the language level of being able to keep up with the pre-set, 'normal' pace of teaching and learning. Instead of being based on in-classroom initiatives, the learning of culturally diverse students struggling with the Greek language was thought to be more appropriate to take place in separation from the rest of their peers, either that meant moving culturally diverse students in year groups below their age or segregating them to exclusively attend induction, preparatory courses based on intensive Greek language learning. If at all possible, inclusion of students with a culturally diverse background in regular classrooms was only envisaged during modules of 'lesser importance' like Arts.

In general, pre-service teachers showing an attachment to national homogeneity advocated for a one-way process of inclusion for culturally diverse students, which involved only them trying to reach the level of the dominant student norm through learning the Greek language as well as possible as soon as possible. This finding was particularly important as it shed light to the way in which monoculturally rooted ideas about 'natural' and 'differentiated' students shape educational provisions (Holloway et al., 2010). Pre-service teachers attached to these ideas failed to recognise their potentials in facilitating the process of inclusion, through initiating acts of social justice, like challenging exclusionary understandings of belonging and adjusting their teaching material as well as methods so that they can be multiculturally relevant.

Apart from shedding more light into how the effect of attachment to ideas of national homogeneity translates into reduced multicultural competence, focus groups' narratives also brought to the surface insights regarding the quality of diversity-related training (Nadelson et

al., 2012) offered to Greek pre-service teachers as part of their studies. Participants' narratives exposed the marginal character of multicultural topics and a gap between theory and practical implementation (Guo et al., 2009; Florio-Ruane, 2001), as their diversity-related training seemed to be restricted to studying multicultural education as an abstract concept rather than an applied practice (Spinthourakis, 2010). Diversity-related training was fragmented, comprising of mostly optional modules with no practical element and disconnected from the teaching practice experience. A similar picture was drawn in relation to the teaching practicum, which was criticised as taking place in perceived homogenous classrooms and as being totally unrelated to multicultural competence implementation. Leading classroom teachers were brought up by the participants as key agents who can promote or discourage multicultural competence. Modelling multicultural education implementation and/or encouraging pre-service teachers themselves to use multicultural education initiatives during their teaching practicum were mentioned as leading teachers' traits promoting multicultural competence. Unfortunately, though, in most cases, the leading teachers, that the participants had experienced throughout their teaching placements, were described as indifferent, if not negative, to multicultural education implementation, giving participants little space to plan and teach independently and thus discouraging their multicultural competence development.

In general, participants explicitly mentioned that they did not feel adequately prepared to address multicultural classrooms, as their teacher training studies failed to provide them with teaching strategies and practical experience of multicultural education implementation and agreed that they needed more and better training to become multiculturally competent (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018; Lehman, 2016; Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016). All in all, the qualitative findings further assisted in understanding pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and the factors influencing it, complementing the quantitative findings through bringing participants' voices and experiences in the foreground and shedding light into experiential aspects that are hard to capture quantitatively.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to summarise the findings of the present thesis, highlighting the contributions that the study makes to the academic literature and its policy implications. The main findings of this thesis advance academic knowledge on multicultural competence and the factors influencing it and could be used to inform policy recommendations for teacher training departments on how to prepare more multiculturally competent teachers. Some suggestions for future research will also be provided before concluding with some final remarks.

6.1. Summary of Findings

Inspired by wider academic literature and policy debates regarding the challenges faced by teacher training departments to prepare multiculturally competent educators, who are ready to facilitate diversity inclusion and cater for the needs of all students irrespective of their backgrounds, the present study's research aim was to examine Greek pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and the factors influencing its development. A mixed-methods approach was employed to combine the strengths of a statistical model with pre-service teachers' voices and experiences as a means of providing a more holistic conceptualisation of the topic under examination.

Regarding multicultural competence, the findings showed that, although based crudely on the quantitative scalar measurements, participants' scores were relatively high, their narratives presented a more complex reality, highlighting misconceptions around the practical manifestations of multicultural competence and a general lack in multicultural teaching knowledge and skills. Multicultural teaching attitudes, knowledge and skills were found to capture the same underlying principal through the factor analysis conducted as part of the quantitative methods, which matches the literature advocating for multicultural competence being comprised of the aforementioned three dimensions (Sue et al., 1982, 1992; Sue, 2001; Gallavan, 2007; Spanierman et al. 2011; Portera, 2014). Moreover, it was clear that multicultural skills with a social justice and equity orientation formed the strongest predictor of multiculturally competent educators (Liang & Zhang, 2009). This finding came up firstly as multicultural teaching skills was the scale presenting the highest loading in the multicultural competence factor created as part of the quantitative analysis. However, the qualitative analysis shed more light into this relationship, showing how participants that were

able to distinguish structural inequalities (re)producing the majority privilege thus hindering marginalised populations' representation and potentials both in Greek society and educational spaces and were able to propose practices challenging this status quo were those showcasing the highest multicultural competence.

Regarding the factors influencing multicultural competence, the findings showed that the statistical model constructed to predict pre-service teachers' multicultural competence had a good explanatory power, accounting for nearly 30% of the variance observed in multicultural competence. The quantitative findings showed that taking into consideration sociocultural positionalities, experiences of international mobilities, multicultural encounters, attachment to national homogeneity as well as experiences of formal educational spaces and their relevant curricula and actors all together is more valuable for predicting pre-service teachers' multicultural competence than looking at each one of these factors separately. Using path analysis to analyse questionnaire survey data helped to identify causal relational networks between gender, political orientation, experiences of travelling and/or studying abroad, multicultural friendships, attachment to national homogeneity, attendance of diversity-related modules, perceived relevance of teaching practicum to multicultural education implementation and multicultural competence. Specifically, being female, identifying with more liberal political stances, studying and/or travelling abroad, having multicultural friends, attending more and richer (in experiences provided and assessment methods used) diversity-related modules as well as perceiving teaching practicum as related to multicultural education implementation all had a positive effect on multicultural competence. On the contrary, being attached to ideas of national homogeneity was found to exert a negative effect and formed the most influential predictor of multicultural competence. The second most influential predictor was perceived relevance of multicultural education implementation to teaching practicum, with gender, political orientation, experiences of international mobility, multicultural encounters and attendance of diversity-related modules following in turn.

The qualitative data obtained out of the focus groups discussions conducted with final-year pre-service teachers brought the participants' voices and experiences to the forefront and provided additional insights into the spaces, agents, processes and experiences that were identified as influential for pre-service teachers' multicultural competence through the quantitative analysis. The analysis of the narratives produced during the focus group discussions brought to the surface themes related particularly to attachment to national

homogeneity, the experiences of diversity-related modules and the teaching practicum. Specifically, participants' narratives provided rich descriptions of how attachment to national homogeneity negatively informed the (re)production of multicultural competence when discussing about practices promoting diversity inclusion in the Greek society and educational system. Moreover, they showed how the nature of the diversity-related modules offered as part of the teacher training curricula as well as the teaching practicum contexts with their hidden curricula and actors, seemed to fail in establishing a clear connection between multicultural education as a theoretical concept and an applied practice, thus failing to make pre-service teachers feel multiculturally competent.

6.2. Contribution to the Literature

Firstly, the present thesis has important contributions to make to the literature on how to best examine multicultural competence, by highlighting the value of a mixed-methods approach. Specifically, the findings of the present study have provided empirical evidence corroborating the concern expressed by Gierke et al. (2018) regarding the suitability of quantitative tools for fully capturing the complexity of multicultural competence, showing that assessing multicultural competence based solely on quantitative ratings is not necessarily an accurate indicator. As previously hypothesised, (Cherng & Davis, 2017; Nadelson et al., 2012; Kaur, 2012), combining quantitative and qualitative data was found to offer more detailed perspectives on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. In the present study this became evident as, despite scoring relatively high in each one of the subscales used in the questionnaire to measure multicultural teaching knowledge, skills and attitudes, participants' narratives during the focus group discussions brought to the surface a more complicated reality regarding their multicultural competence. Specifically, the focus group discussions revealed Greek pre-service teachers' misconceptions around the practical manifestations of multicultural competence, highlighting a particular lack in applied multicultural teaching knowledge and skills. In general, participants were found to be able to score highly on ready item-statements provided to them through the questionnaires, but struggled to discursively (re)produce multicultural competence, especially when it came to providing concrete examples of teaching strategies they would employ to promote and include cultural diversity within the classroom context. So, aligning with previous research (Perkins, 2012; Guo et al., 2009; Fu et al., 2017), this study has contributed to the literature on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence by highlighting the necessity for mixed-methods approaches as the

best way to holistically capture the complex concept of multicultural competence. This is because the qualitative methods put the quantitative finings in a different light, showing how causal relational networks identified through the path analytic model translate into narratives, discursive practices and embodied experiences and practical manifestations related to different levels of multicultural knowledge, attitudes and teaching skills.

In relation to the individual aspects comprising multicultural competence, the findings of the present study have shown how important multicultural teaching skills seem to be as indicators of multicultural competence. Quantitative data revealed that between the three elements comprising multicultural competence (i.e. knowledge, attitudes and skills), multicultural teaching skills were found to be the component most strongly associated to multicultural competence. Focus group narratives, bringing on the surface participants' understandings regarding multicultural competence and its practical manifestations, validated the argument made by McIntyre, Rosebery and González (2001), according to which multicultural attitudes might be essential but are not adequate for multiculturally competent educators, unless transformed into effective classroom practice, as the educational profession is embedded in praxis and the classroom context.

Specifically, on the one hand, participants acknowledged the multicultural composition of contemporary classrooms as well as the importance of multicultural competence to successfully address their role within them, appeared willing to assist culturally diverse students' learning and perceived implementing multicultural education and raising awareness around diversity issues as quintessential, independent of classroom demographics. On the other hand, these statements were all left mostly on a very general, theoretical level (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018). Participants struggled to come up with sample strategies they would use to incorporate and promote diversity in their teaching materials and practices and their reflexive response was to associate multicultural education implementation with the physical presence of diverse students in the classroom. Put differently, this research has demonstrated that pre-service teachers have not embodied the necessity of multicultural education for 'homogeneous' classrooms and that their conceptualisations of creating multicultural spaces of education are predominantly restricted to equality of treatment, 'celebrating diversity' and 'add-on' approaches. Most importantly, the majority of participants struggled to imagine their role as agents of social justice in creating classrooms that would form genuine shared spaces of multicultural interaction and

learning (Ford & Quinn, 2010; Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018; Pantić & Florian, 2015), with some participants being sceptical even about the very idea of creating integrated multicultural learning spaces for 'mainstream' and culturally diverse students within the same classroom context.

This finding corroborates the claim of Still and Squires (2015: 181) that being aware of the challenges that multicultural classrooms pose is completely different from actively doing something to address them. Contrary to the suggestion made by Garrote Salazar & Fernández Agüero (2016) on the need for teacher training departments to focus on multicultural awareness and attitudes, this study suggests that teacher training departments and future research should shift their attention to multicultural teaching skills. This is particularly important since the vast majority of the studies carried out so far on multicultural competence within the educational context focus solely on the attitudinal perspective (Trent et al., 2008). Being more exact, the present study supports the need to focus on pre-service teachers' social justice orientation (Pantić & Florian, 2015), which, despite mentioned as gaining ground as an aspect of teacher training programs in North America and Europe (Kaur, 2012), seems neglected by Greek initial teacher training. This argument can be made as the majority of participants in the present study struggled to critically reflect upon structural barriers and dominant hegemonic narratives (re)producing the precedence of the majority norm and the deficiency and exclusion of minority cultures. In addition, all participants lacked in actual implementation of strategies promoting social justice (Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018), as neither the diversity-related modules nor the teaching practicum contexts the pre-service teachers experienced encouraged or required such practices. In a context like Greece, where the dominant discourses and educational curricula lack in multicultural perspectives and tend to promote exclusionary understandings of belonging for individuals with a culturally diverse background (Chalari & Georgas, 2016), pre-service teachers' multicultural preparation needs to be based around ideas of and opportunities for actively challenging this status quo. In other words, initial teacher training needs to provide future educators with opportunities to critically reflect upon structural barriers hindering diversity inclusion and culturally diverse students' learning. Most importantly, though, teacher preparation should be based around practical experiences requiring existing curricula transformation through the use of counter-hegemonic instructional practices and educational material that assist and reflect multicultural understandings of belonging and facilitate the learning of all students

(Banks, 2006; Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gay & Howard, 2000; Gay, 2005; Gorski, 2009a; Jenks et al., 2001; Pantić & Florian, 2015).

Apart from offering insights regarding pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, this study has also important contributions to make to the body of literature looking at the factors influencing multicultural competence. This study suggests a mixed-methods approach as the best way to gain more holistic conceptualisations of the varied factors influencing it. In particular, this study has shown how geographies of education and learning can contribute to the study of factors influencing multicultural competence, highlighting the importance of taking into consideration positionalities, subjective experiences as well as formal and informal educational spaces and practices as a whole (Brooks et al., 2012; Holloway & Jöns, 2012; Leander et al., 2010; Robertson, 2010; Waters, 2018). Specifically, the present study supports the notion that looking solely at study/travel abroad experiences and attendance of diversity-related modules is not enough for predicting multicultural competence (Seidl et al., 2015; Parkhouse et al., 2016), as such an approach misses past and present experiences of pre-service teachers from other spaces that have important role in multicultural competence formation. On the contrary, the present study provides empirical validation to the argument made by Parkhouse et al. (2016) in their qualitative, small-scale study regarding the importance of "accumulating experiences" for the development of multicultural competence. Thus, this study suggests that teacher training should be better envisaged in its situatedness, as part of the spatio-temporal chain leading to multicultural competence, which is influenced by background positionalities, previous attitudes and experiences of pre-service teachers, but can also in itself influence pre-service teachers' experiences and understandings of multicultural competence. Furthermore, the present study has identified the specific factors that need to be taken into consideration for a more accurate prediction of multicultural competence, namely pre-service teachers' positionalities, multicultural experiences, personal attitudes towards diversity as well as experiences of the educational context of teacher training and teaching practicum, their formal and hidden curricula and actors involved in them.

Looking at the findings from a geographical perspective, this study has contributed to the geographies of education and learning by responding to the call of Holloway et al. (2011: 2) to bring together a direct engagement with young people (i.e. pre-service teachers) with an exploration of the influence of "wider actors, institutions and processes" on their learning.

Moreover, this study traced "webs of connections" (Holloway et al., 2010: 595) between different experiences, spaces and actors influencing pre-service teachers' multicultural competence (ibid; Holloway et al., 2011; Holloway & Jöns, 2012; Leander et al., 2010). Being specific, this study managed to trace causal relationships between the various formal and informal experiences of learning, from the micro-space of the self to the macro-space of national identity narratives (Bright et al., 2013), that influence multicultural competence. This study has also contributed to understandings of the relationship between mobiltiies and place for pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, emphasising the need to think about education and learning relationally, taking into consideration both subjectivities and various structures for more holistic conceptualisations of education and learning (Waters, 2017). Based on the success of the mixed-methods approach adopted in the present study in capturing more holistically the spaces, processes, experiences and actors influencing multicultural competence (Holloway et al., 2011), the combination of path analysis with focus group discussions offers a methodological contribution for geographies of education, as a way for capturing the interaction between subjectivities, personal experiences, as well as educational contexts with their processes and actors in shaping learning experiences (Leander et al., 2010; Waters, 2017).

This thesis has provided information regarding the spatialisation and temporality of pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, showing that the latter is reproduced through and influenced by the interrelation between 'the self', experiences of international mobilities, multicultural encounters, national homogeneity narratives as well as the agents, formal and informal curricula of university teacher training programmes and teaching practice contexts. Breaking the causal chain of connections down can provide more insights regarding the contributions that each individual effect identified has to offer, while tracing the relationship between diverse spaces, experiences, actors and multicultural competence.

Firstly, the effect identified between being female and heightened multicultural competence revealed the gendered aspect of pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. The positive effect exerted by more liberal political views on multicultural competence, mediated through better foreign language competence and lower attachment to national homogeneity, showed the political aspect of multicultural competence. All in all, these two findings showed how pre-service teachers' multicultural competence was found to be constrained or enabled based on pre-service teachers gendered and political positionalities.

The beneficial effect of experience of international mobilities through travelling and/or studying abroad on multicultural competence, although fully mediated through increased multicultural friendships, showed the relevance of the mobility approach (Waters, 2017) to multicultural learning. Moreover, the present study revealed that, whilst multicultural competence is grounded, it is also connected to experiences taking place in other times, spaces and places, like travelling/studying abroad and the heightened meaningful multicultural encounter potentials this experience brings. The abovementioned finding can be considered an empirical contribution, disentangling the relationship between mobilities and education (Leander et al., 2010), showing that mobility experiences seem to translate into educational gains in multicultural learning not directly but through leading to the creation of more meaningful multicultural encounters.

The beneficial effect traced between multicultural friendships and heightened multicultural competence, partly mediated through lower attachment to national homogeneity, is an important empirical contribution this study has to offer to the literature on the multicultural pedagogical potentials of meaningful multicultural encounters (Schuermans & Debruyne, 2017; Wilson, 2013b, 2014b, 2017a, 2017b). This finding addressed the underexamined domain of the causal relationships between multicultural encounters and their effects (Schuermans & Debruyne, 2017; Wilson, 2017b), showing that, meaningful multicultural encounters like multicultural friendships, reduce prejudice against perceived 'others' (translated here through lower attachment to national homogeneity) and through them produce increased multicultural competence. As such, the present study provided empirical evidence on the transferability of the multicultural educational gains of multicultural encounters beyond the specific space and time, in which multicultural friendships take place.

The remaining of the effects identified provided information on the influence of the conceived space of the nation as well as the perceived spaces of initial teacher training and teaching practice in schools on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence (see Rowan, Mayer, Kline, Kostogriz, & Walker-Gibbs for a spatial analysis of teacher education based upon Soja, 1996). The strong, detrimental effect of attachment to national homogeneity on multicultural competence showed how pre-service teachers' multicultural competence can be hindered through the macro-space of dominant national ideologies. As became clear through the narratives produced in the focus group discussions, pre-service teachers' multicultural competence was compromised by monocultural understandings of belonging, which form the

basis of Greek national identity construction and have been (re)produced through media and political discourse as well as through educational curricula, particularly those of History and Religious Education. Pre-service teachers who favoured the majority culture precedence resisted meaningful curricular transformation that could promote multicultural representations and understandings of belonging and envisaged facilitating the learning of students with a culturally diverse background mainly through the provision of intensive Greek language courses, outside the 'mainstream' classrooms.

The university space was the next influential space identified for pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. Despite the quantitative findings showing that attending more and richer in content diversity-related modules had a beneficial effect on multicultural competence, pre-service teachers' narratives showed that their multicultural teacher training formed a marginal element of the teacher training curricula they had experienced, was fragmented and predominantly theoretical, with no opportunities for practical implementation.

Finally, pre-service teachers' multicultural competence was found to be influenced by the space of the teaching practicum. Specifically, although perceived relevance of the teaching practicum to multicultural education implementation was found to be beneficial, narratives produced by the pre-service teachers showed that multicultural education implementation neither formed an assessment axis of their teaching practicum nor was it encouraged and/or modelled by the classroom teachers they got to work with. Based on the last two findings, it became clear that the influence of teacher training studies on pre-service teachers' multicultural competence should not only be understood in terms of formal curricula, but also in terms of informal curricula and actors' practices (Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009; Holloway et al., 2010), like the marginal presence of multicultural education and perspectives throughout the teacher training curricula and the lack of encouragement, if not opposition, by the leading classroom teachers towards multicultural education implementation during the teaching practicum.

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, pre-service teachers are important actors for reimaging educational landscapes, as they can act as agents of change towards social justice, through the promotion of new, multicultural understandings of belonging and through the facilitation of culturally diverse students' learning. The findings of the present study, though,

have shown the grounded positionalities of pre-service teachers, as actors both enabled and constrained in their attempt to acquire and embody multicultural competence towards social justice by the causal relationships identified between their sociocultural background, multicultural experiences and encounters, attachment to national homogeneity, diversity-related training and teaching practice experience. Based on the present study's findings, pre-service teachers' conceptualisations and practical manifestations of multicultural competence in Greece could be understood as compromised by: a)their gender and political orientation, b) their lack in multicultural experiences and encounters, c)the ethnocentric and monocultural grand national narratives (re)produced through policies and educational curricula, d) the marginal and overly theoretical nature of multicultural education in the Greek teacher training curricula as well as e) the absence of multicultural education implementation from the teaching practicum experiences, influenced by the lack of encouragement provided by the leading teachers towards this direction.

Based on the aforementioned, this thesis has proven how pre-service teachers do not form blank canvasses ripe for moulding by their teacher training in terms of their multicultural competence (Dervin, 2017). They have their own 'baggage' that comes from their sociocultural positionalities and previous direct and indirect multicultural experiences they have had or been exposed to (ibid). Should teacher training aim at preparing multiculturally competent teachers, it should equip pre-service teachers with the skills to critically reflect upon their past and future multicultural experiences (ibid) while also providing them with more lived multicultural opportunities (Tarozzi, 2014). Thus, despite forming just one part on the spatio-temporal chain influencing pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, initial teacher training has a lot of potentials in addressing shortcomings related to the rest of the positionalities, experiences and attitudes found to affect multicultural competence. However, the present study showed that the initial teacher training currently provided in Greece seems to lack the provision of multicultural experiences and encounters as well as in engaging pre-service teachers in critical discourses around dominant narratives of national homogeneity and cultural diversity belonging in society and education. On top of that, the marginal status of multicultural teacher training provided and the absence of opportunities for multicultural education implementation further constrain the production of multiculturally competent future educators with a social justice orientation (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Sleeter, 2001).

Having identified the weaknesses of Greek pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, the shortcomings of the Greek teacher training curricula and the factors influencing multicultural competence, this study could assist in the revaluation of the practices adapted by the various teacher training departments toward multicultural teacher training so far. In other words, the present study has wider implications for the academic literature and policy debates around the best ways to train multiculturally competent educators. Aligning with previous studies but overcoming some of their main limitations (e.g. examination of single institutional background, small sample size, use of qualitative approaches and focus on single multicultural course/experience), the main argument of this study is that solely planning the frequency with which diversity-related modules are taught (Acquah & Commins, 2017) or focusing on the importance that participation in travelling/study abroad experience might have (Seidl et al., 2015; Parkhouse et al., 2016) is not enough. The present study differentiates itself from previous ones, supporting the need to not focus on enriching individual diversity-related modules or courses (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Fu et al., 2017; Still & Squires, 2015) but on enriching the content of teacher training programs as a whole, with a focus on addressing the spaces of learning, which can enable and hinder multicultural competence. Teacher training programs are "possibilities machine[s]" (Soja, 1996: 81) which require structural change to fulfil their change potential (Lefebvre, 1991; Cook & Hemming, 2011; Thiem, 2009). Infusing the curriculum with a variety of multicultural experiences throughout the duration of studies in all modules offered and the teaching practicum experience (Childs, 2017), addressing pre-service teachers' pre-existing, binary perceptions of the 'self' and the 'other', placing an emphasis on social justice and equity pedagogy (Causey & Haubert, 2016) and bridging the gap between multicultural education theory and implementation (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Guo et al., 2009), is advocated as the optimal approach towards teacher training restructuring for the generation of meaningful change. In what follows, six recommendations based on the study's findings will be presented, that could improve teacher education provisions towards facilitating pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. As misconceptualisations around multicultural education and its content as well as lack of multicultural practical skills have been identified among pre-service teachers from HE institutions in the so called 'traditional' multicultural contexts (see Guo et al., 2009 for Canada and Still & Squires, 2015 for the USA), the recommendations provided could be considered relevant to teacher training institutions worldwide.

6.3. Educational Policy Recommendations for Multicultural Teacher Training

6.3.1. Taking Gender and Political Orientation into Consideration

The present study's findings showed that being female and having a more liberal political orientation were the only influential sociodemographic characteristics affecting multicultural competence positively. This seems to indicate that gender and political orientation differences need to be taken into consideration and addressed to the extent possible by the teacher training programs.

Regarding the effect of gender, based on previous studies, the gender difference in multicultural competence has been attributed to the potentially differential experiences men and women have had with discrimination as a result of their gender identity, with males most of the times forming the dominant group and females being more likely to have been discriminated against (Constantine, 2000; Pope & Mueller, 2005). Looking specifically at the case of male pre-service teachers from a majority ethnoracial and socio-economic background, it is probable that they might have no personal point of reference in terms of inequalities arising from sociocultural identities. Based on the sociodemographic characteristics of both the global and the present study's pre-service teachers (i.e. majority ethnic, white, middle-class), engaging pre-service teachers in targeted interventions that will deepen understanding of privilege and oppression based on sociocultural identities (Pope & Mueller, 2005) and of how such inequalities are relevant to them as teachers of multicultural classrooms might be beneficial to tackle the lack of previous relevant experiences.

As far as political orientation is concerned, teacher training can contribute to the establishment of critical thinkers who support political positions because they have a clear understanding of the arguments behind them. Discussions should be encouraged upon objective presentations of political views regarding diversity integration and majority-minority relations at the general societal and educational level. Where pre-service teachers make assertions that are unsupported by evidence but prevalent in the media or political discourse, teacher educators need to challenge them to further their reasoning and find additional evidence to back up their positions, without putting them off joining political discussions (Jones, 2017). Through this process, pre-service teachers could, for example, uncover misrepresentations of culturally diverse individuals usually (re)produced by far-right

politicians and understand the need to critically examine unfounded claims that are often used for scapegoating purposes. Making those connections between the far-right and the (re)production of xenophobia clear will hopefully assist pre-service teachers in endorsing more liberal political views.

6.3.2. Enhancing Opportunities for Travelling and Studying Abroad

The present study found that more experiences of traveling and/or studying abroad increase multicultural competence, highlighting the beneficial effect of mobilities for multicultural learning. However, when looking at the international mobility experiences that the participants reported, it became clear that these were quite limited. Stebleton et al. (2013) have already highlighted how, although traveling abroad for recreational purposes, formal or informal education all influence multicultural competence, structured educational experiences provided by universities are the most influential. Consequently, it seems like teacher training departments can play a big role in increasing pre-service teachers' mobility experiences.

A plethora of studies has already highlighted sample structures of successful mobility experiences offered by teacher education departments (Stebleton et al., 2013; Mesker, Wassink, Akkerman, & Bakker, 2018; McGaha & Linder, 2012; Walters, Garii, & Walters, 2009). The inclusion of pre-departure preparation (e.g. Leutwyler & Meierhans, 2016 for specific development goals), "while-abroad activities" (Lemmons, 2015: 550) and support (Salmona, Partlo, Kaczynski, & Leonard, 2015) as well as post-experience reflection on what was learnt and experienced abroad as well as how this impacted prior knowledge, attitudes and skills seem to be paramount to facilitate the gains in terms of multicultural competence development (Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Mesker et al., 2018; McGaha & Linder, 2012; Walters et al., 2009).

So, teacher training departments in Greece should provide relevant opportunities and encourage participation among their students. The ERASMUS program that is already in place should be utilised towards this direction, with teacher educators informing participants about the gains of partaking. Another idea would be the establishment of teaching-related field trips abroad (Walters et al., 2009), through which pre-service teachers can acquire a first-hand experience of both living and teaching away from home. One thing that needs to be taken into consideration while designing and promoting experiences abroad is the effect that socioeconomic status was found to have on travelling and studying abroad experiences. Pre-

service teachers from a higher socioeconomic background were found to be more mobile compared to those coming from a less affluent background. Thus, teacher training departments should do their best to provide mobility opportunities financially accessible to all students.

6.3.3. Facilitating Multicultural Encounters

Although more multicultural encounters were found to be beneficial for multicultural competence in the present study, participants reported minimal meaningful contact with culturally diverse individuals, having only a few culturally diverse friends. Moreover, when it came to opportunities provided by the teacher training departments for interaction with individuals from a culturally diverse background, both diversity-related modules and teaching practicum contexts seemed like they had nothing to offer.

As becomes clear, teacher training departments have a big margin of improvement in terms of encouraging more multicultural contact. A first step already mentioned in the literature and particularly relevant for the present study due to its highly homogenous sample is the need for heightened diversity presence among both the student and the teaching body of teacher training departments (Bhopal, 2018). Since, in Greece, entering a HE institution is solely defined by the grade achieved in the national exams at the end of secondary school, no selection criteria bias can be attributed to the low diversity presence in terms of pre-service teachers. However, the fact that Greek is by and large the only official language of instruction offered provides a structural barrier to incoming student and staff international mobility (Vogopoulou, Sarakinioti, & Tsatsaroni, 2015) that could facilitate multiculturalism on campus. As expressed in a European Migration Network Report (2012), contrasting the international trend of HE opening up to international collaborations and foreign students, Greek institutions are still characterised by introversion, especially so in undergraduate programs. For example, although some ERASMUS students choose Greek institutions as their study abroad destinations, they normally do not attend the regular classrooms due to the language barrier and are assigned to separate modules designed specifically for ERASMUS students. Consequently, either offering at least some common for all sessions delivered in English or organising some multicultural group work (Brendel, Aksit, Aksit, & Schrüfer, 2016) would be some ideas encouraging multicultural encounters and contact. In terms of staff-related diversity, establishing collaboration with institutions abroad and offering staff visit schemes could be a way of attracting incoming staff mobility. Of course, this should be

again coupled up with breaking the Greek language barrier in terms of instruction, so that the visiting academics can share their knowledge with the pre-service teachers of the home institutions through lectures and seminars.

Another way for teacher training departments to facilitate multicultural encounters would be forming links with the various organisations established in each local community by culturally diverse groups (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016). The present study's finding reported a pronounced lack of embodied diversity presence in the diversity-related modules attended by the participants although participants considered this an element that would assist their multicultural competence development. So, inviting local community members with a culturally diverse background to talk about their actions and experiences to pre-service teachers could enhance multicultural encounters opportunities as well as the representation of multicultural perspectives in teacher training curricula. As previous research has shown, the planning of programs or projects involving both pre-service teachers and culturally diverse population by initial teacher training institutions is a way to facilitate multicultural appreciation through meaningful multicultural encounters (Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011; Keengwe, 2010; Phoon et al., 2013).Moreover, reaching out to the local communities could be beneficial to establish partnerships that could be used for the facilitation of multicultural service-learning placements (Parkhouse et al., 2016).

6.3.4. Challenging Ideas of National Homogeneity and Promoting Diversity Inclusion

Teacher training programs need to assist pre-service teachers in understanding the incompatibility of homogeneity and diversity integration (Dervin, 2017). Teacher educators should encourage discussions around diversity and belonging in the Greek society and educational system. Pre-service teachers need to be engaged in critical reflections so that they can understand their beliefs, feelings and values on the topic. Counterproductive beliefs in terms of diversity integration should be transformed before pre-service teachers can effectively and efficiently implement multicultural teaching (Weinstein et al., 2003) and for this to materialise, teacher educators need to support their students (Skepple, 2014). The aim of the aforementioned process is to assist pre-service teachers in uncovering the practices and structures that (re)produce national homogeneity as an ideal and come up with strategies of how to tackle those within the educational setting. As Dervin (2017: 101) aptly mentions, multicultural teacher training has the potential to provide pre-service teachers with

"theoretical, methodological and reflexive tools to 'dig deeper'" into the discourses and/or practices of 'othering' they have been exposed to and reinterpret them. So, inspired by the present study's findings, pre-service teachers need to be assisted in understanding how excluding or conditionally including culturally diverse students from regular classrooms as well as perceiving second/heritage language as unrelated to the formal educational context reinforces the idea of a distinction between 'us' and 'them' and goes against the principle of diversity integration. Similarly, they also need to be aware of the precedence of Greekness, understood as being of Greek descent, speaking Greek, being Christian Orthodox and share the Greek customs and traditions, currently reflected by the educational curricula and the impact that this has in terms of shaping both natives' and culturally diverse students' ideas of belonging. Most importantly though, pre-service teachers need to be trained to realise the role that they can play in challenging the aforementioned practices and materials to make space for diversity and facilitate multicultural belonging. In other words, pre-service teachers need to be trained to become agents of social-justice, able to critically reflect on the hegemonic discourses influencing the educational spaces and the practices embedded in them, but, most importantly, ready to initiate and implement counterhegemonic practices facilitating educational experiences relevant to all students (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gay & Howard, 2000; Gay, 2005; Gorski, 2009a; Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018; Jenks et al., 2001).

As Gay (2002) mentions, cultural diversity is related to all subjects taught in schools and future teachers need to know how to make space for cultural diversity, even when the educational curricula in place do not provide for that. Thus, initial teacher training should prepare prospective teachers to initiate the incorporation of multiple perspectives and differentiated instructional practices so as to ensure that the culture of the classroom is inclusive of and relevant to all students and their backgrounds (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Pre-service teachers need to understand that meaningful multicultural integration necessitates disrupting narratives of homogeneity and infusing multicultural perspectives to create a new, multicultural 'we' (Dervin, 2017).

6.3.5. Infusing Modules with Multicultural Elements and Opportunities for Practice

The overemphasis on theory and the sporadic inclusion of diversity-related modules form two elements of the current teacher training hidden curricula that convey the message of

multicultural competence being loosely related to the preparation of successful future educators. Thus, there is a pressing need for revising the teacher training curricula so that, instead of a fragmented incorporation of stand-alone, optional diversity-related modules (Phunstog, 1995; Able et al., 2014), multicultural experiences and perspectives will be mandatory (Bhopal et al., 2009) and integrated throughout the curriculum of studies in all modules provided (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Childs, 2017; Seeberg & Minick, 2012; Gay, 1997; Guo et al., 2009; Milner et al., 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Initial teacher education needs to pay attention to both multicultural concepts and practice. Concepts and knowledge in general form the first and minimum condition for effective multicultural teaching, as new-to-the-profession teachers cannot be expected to teach what they do not know (Le Roux & Möller, 2002; Spinthourakis, 2010). This means that modules included in initial teacher education need to be grounded in real-life contexts and fostered through multiple teaching strategies (Sleeter & Owuor, 2011), incorporating and representing multicultural perspectives (Causey & Haubert, 2016) as well as encouraging prejudice reduction (Banks, 2005) through the facilitation of critical reflections and discussions around issues of diversity and belonging (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014). However, as the present study showed, conceptual knowledge is not enough and for that reason, teacher training programs need to go a step further, preparing teachers to translate multicultural knowledge into practical teaching skills that foster multicultural inclusion and have a social justice orientation (Guo et al., 2009; Causey & Haubert, 2016; Tarozzi, 2014). As abstract theoretical training does not enhance multicultural competence (Seeberg & Minick, 2012), there is a need to merge the gap between theory and practice, including practical elements requiring pre-service teachers to actively implement culturally responsive teaching and equity pedagogy (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016). Thus, multicultural teacher preparation should combine theory with active engagement in first-hand multicultural experiences and establish a clear link between multicultural education theory and every-day teaching practice.

6.3.6. Establishing a Link between Multicultural Education Implementation and Teaching Practice Experiences

The absence of multicultural education implementation from the teaching practice experience reported in the present study was yet another element of hidden curriculum currently communicating the message that multicultural competence is irrelevant for the every-day teaching practice. Thus, apart from altering the teacher training curriculum with the infusion

of multicultural elements in all modules provided, diversifying the teaching practice experience and linking it to multicultural education implementation is also essential in establishing the relevance of multicultural competence for the teaching profession.

In terms of classroom setting, participants seemed to perceive the classrooms they were placed in as homogenous, providing them with no opportunity to address a multicultural audience and implement multicultural initiatives. So, their exposure to more diverse settings could be a prompt that would encourage multicultural education implementation, based on previous studies that showed that pre-service teachers perceived teaching in diverse settings as the most influential factor in developing their multicultural competence (Guo et al., 2009; Skepple, 2014). The introduction of multicultural service learning experiences, combining a multicultural field-based placement with coursework (Sleeter, 2001) would be an ideal solution. This is because such an approach bridges theory and practice (Billig, 2000) and gives to pre-service teachers the opportunity to experience teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms first-hand. However, the sheer experience might not be enough for improving multicultural competence (Sperling, 2007), unless accompanied by mentors, which will support pre-service teachers in navigating and learning to respond to all student' needs, as well as structured coursework, which will prompt pre-service teachers to reflect critically about what this experience taught them in terms of multicultural teaching and learning (Garmon, 2004; Wade, 2000). Observation and teaching practice placements in refugee reception classes or after-school support classes offered by organisations dealing with the integration of migrants or other culturally diverse groups could be some sample ideas around which to form multicultural service-learning experiences for Greek pre-service teachers.

Although the restructuring of the teaching practice experience should involve exposing students to settings including more culturally diverse students (Skepple, 2014), attention needs to be paid so that multicultural education implementation is not represented as a practice solely related to a major physical presence of culturally diverse students. On the contrary, multicultural education implementation should be part and parcel of the teaching practice experience in all settings as it is as relevant for multicultural classrooms as for perceived homogenous ones (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014). As Taylor and Quintana (2003) specify, prospective teachers need to understand that all children, including 'majority' ones, have much to gain from the implementation of multicultural education initiatives. Establishing multicultural education implementation as a criterion for pre-service teachers'

teaching practice assessment would be a structural change merging the gap between multicultural competence as theoretically important and practically relevant. Further steps towards this direction would be the careful selection of leading teachers that act as role models in terms of multicultural competence (Still & Squires, 2015), infusing multicultural education in their daily practice instead of treating it as an add-on approach, implemented only if subject-curriculum content or time allows it. Pre-service teachers need to be encouraged to not blindly abide to the textbooks or follow the leading teachers' predetermined teaching plans. On the contrary, participants should be encouraged to be creative, adapting the teaching material in place, so that they promote learning with a social justice orientation (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016).

6.4. Suggestions for Future Research

Further investigation into the development of cultural competence in teaching is needed, as despite the well-established need for multicultural training in teacher education, the present findings showed that considerable challenges remain in preparing new teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work effectively with increasingly multicultural student populations. Towards this direction, a first route could be examining how and if the present study's findings apply to other national contexts. Although findings can be considered nationally representative for Greece due to the sampling process followed, future studies should try to apply the methodology and factors considered in the present study in diverse national contexts, so as to further examine the generalisability of the findings presented. Other "new countries of immigration" (Pugliese, 2011: 100; see also Castles & Miller, 2009: 108-109 and King, 2000) from Southern Europe could be used for that purpose, to check if the similarities present on migration histories and policies to address diversity translate in similarities in pre-service teachers' multicultural competence and factors influencing its development. Equally, the study's content and methods could also be applied to contexts with a longer history as multicultural societies and with more experience in multicultural teacher training in an attempt to examine commonalities and differences.

Moreover, as in the present study data relied solely on self-reporting, it is unclear if indices of multicultural competence actually translate to performance. Additional indicators of multicultural teaching competence, such as classroom observations are needed, to examine if participants' scores and narratives correspond to reality (Spanierman et al., 2011). Consequently, future studies could use alternative data sources and methods to get better

insights into pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. For example, observing prospective teachers while they undertake their teaching practice could provide evidence regarding the alignment between answers given on a questionnaire or during a focus group and actual teaching practice in terms of multicultural competence and multicultural education implementation.

Finally, future studies could focus on teacher educators' multicultural competence, as, if faculty members of teacher training programs are not themselves multiculturally competent, it is hard to envisage how teacher training can succeed in producing multiculturally competent educators (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Murray, 2016). On a relevant note, future research could focus on reviewing initial teacher training curricula of studies, in an attempt to examine the emphasis given to the multicultural preparation of future teachers as an intended learning outcome as well as the content of the actions taken towards the fulfilment of this goal. This information could then be used as a basis upon which to examine differential outcomes in pre-service multicultural competence.

6.5. Concluding Remarks

With school classrooms in Western world countries becoming increasingly multicultural spaces (Acquah & Commins, 2017; Basu, 2011), the need for the preparation of multiculturally competent educators is ever more pronounced. Future teachers are required to respond to the needs of all students through the creation of educational spaces that recognise and respect cultural diversity, facilitate multicultural learning and promote multicultural understandings of belonging (Bhopal & Danaher, 2013; Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014). Such spaces are vital for the sustainability of harmonious multicultural coexistence and the move towards more socially just societies (Bhopal, 2018). However, as the present study showed, there are still many challenges to be addressed by teacher training departments before future teachers are prepared to initiate meaningful educational changes and social justice in the way described above. This study also advocated that initial teacher education has the potential to act as a key site that can promote "ideological contestation" (McCreary et al., 2013: 255) of and resistance towards (Thiem, 2009) monoculturalism and exclusionary understandings of cultural diversity and prepare multiculturally competent future educators. For this to materialise, the teacher training space needs to be restructured to be infused with multicultural experiences and perspectives, praising the importance of multicultural education

both in theory and practice, through formal and informal curricula, actively contesting hegemonic narratives of national homogeneity with a social justice orientation.

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Appendix A: Multicultural Competence's Components and Their Content

Table 1: Components of Multicultural Competence and Their Content as Presented by Sue (2001: 799)

Belief/Attitude	*Knowledge*	*Skill*
1. Aware and sensitive to own heritage and valuing/respecting differences. 2. Aware of own background/experiences and biases and how they influence psychological processes. 3. Recognizes limits of competencies and expertise. 4. Comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and others. 5. In touch with negative emotional reactions toward racial/ethnic groups and can be nonjudgmental. 6. Aware of stereotypes and preconceived notions. 7. Respects religious and/or spiritual beliefs of others. 8. Respects indigenous helping practices and community networks. 9. Values bilingualism.	1. Has knowledge of own racial/cultural heritage and how it affects perceptions. 2. Possesses knowledge about racial identity development. Able to acknowledge own racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. 3. Knowledgeable about own social impact and communication styles. 4. Knowledgeable about groups one works or interacts with. 5. Understands how race/ethnicity affects personality formation, vocational choices, psychological disorders, and so forth. 6. Knows about sociopolitical influences, immigration, poverty, powerlessness, and so forth. 7. Understands culture-bound, class-bound, and linguistic features of psychological help. 8. Knows the effects of institutional barriers. 9. Knows bias of assessment. 10. Knowledgeable about minority family structures, community, and so forth. 11. Knows how discriminatory practices operate at a community level.	1. Seeks out educational, consultative, and multicultural training experiences. 2. Seeks to understand self as racial/cultural being. 3. Familiarizes self with relevant research on racial/ethnic groups. 4. Involved with minority groups outside of work role: community events, celebrations, neighbors, and so forth. 5. Able to engage in a variety of verbal/nonverbal helping styles. 6. Can exercise institutional intervention skills on behalf of clients. 7. Can seek consultation with traditional healers. 8. Can take responsibility to provide linguistic competence for clients. 9. Has expertise in cultural aspects of assessment. 10. Works to eliminate bias, prejudice, and discrimination. 11. Educates clients in the nature of one's practice.

NOTE: Adapted from D. W. Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis (1992).

Appendix B: Factor's Characteristics and Loadings

Table 1: Characteristics of 'Multicultural Competence' Factor

Items	Item Average	Factor Loading
Multicultural Teaching Knowledge Scale (MTK)	4.31 (SD=0.83)	0.777
Teachers' Multicultural Attitudes Survey (TMAS)	3.89 (SD=0.44)	0.787
Multicultural Teaching Skills Scale (MTS)	4.55 (SD=0.76)	0.900
Valid n (listwise)=299		

Table 2: Characteristics of 'Indirect Multicultural Experiences' Factor

Items	Item Average	Factor Loading
Number of Foreign Languages Spoken (Range: 0-5)	1.83 (SD=0.79)	0.943
Foreign Language Proficiency Scale (0=no proficiency in any language- 20: excellent command in 5 languages)	4.11 (SD=1.99)	0.943
Valid n (listwise)=350		

Table 3: Characteristics of 'Direct Multicultural Experiences' Factor

Items	Item Average	Factor Loading
Travelling Abroad within Europe (1=none - 4=very much)	1.93 (SD=0.86)	0.786
Travelling Abroad Outside Europe (1=none - 4=very much)	1.25 (SD=0.58)	0.674
Study Abroad (1=yes)	0.65 (SD=0.25)	0.636
Valid n (listwise)=339		

Table 4: Characteristics of ‘Diversity-Related Modules Attended’ Factor

Items	Item Average	Factor Loading
Sum of Modules Attended	1.43 (SD=1.16)	0.925
Sum of Diverse Elements Included in Diversity-Related Modules Attended	1.49 (SD=1.18)	0.925
Valid n (listwise)=297		

Appendix C: Sample Questionnaire

Dear student,

This **questionnaire** forms part of my PhD research in Loughborough University, which is related to **multicultural competence**. The completion of this questionnaire is necessary for the successful conduction of this study and the completion of my PhD research. Consequently, I would be grateful if you could spend some of your time to complete this questionnaire. Please, pay attention to the questions and make sure you give an answer to all of them. The questions ask for your personal opinion and experiences so try to be as precise and as honest as possible. Your help is truly priceless.

This questionnaire is strictly **anonymous** and **confidential**. The information that you provide today will be used solely for the purpose of helping me to complete my dissertation. Any data that I collect will be stored on a secure server which is password protected and will be destroyed within six years. Finally, I would like to mention that this project has been **approved by Loughborough University's Ethical Advisory Committee**.

So, thank you in advance for your time and cooperation!

I. Contact with Diversity

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY PUTTING AN 'X' IN THE CORRESPONDING BOX

1. Which of the following foreign languages do you speak and how good is your command in each one of them?

	None	**Little**	**Good**	**Very Good**	**Excellent**
English					
French					
German					
Italian					
Spanish					
Other (please specify)					
Other (please specify)					

2. Indicate how much you have:

	Not at all	**Somewhat**	**Much**	**Very Much**
Travelled abroad **within** Europe				
Travelled abroad **outside** Europe				

3. Indicate how much contact you have/had with people from a culturally diverse background in:

	None	**Little**	**Much**	**Very Much**
The neighbourhood in which you grow up				
Primary School				
High School				
University				

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY CIRCLING YOUR ANSWER

4. **Do you have any friends with a diverse cultural background?**

1 None **2** A Few **3** Some **4** Many **5** Prefer not to Answer

5. **Do you have any relatives with a diverse cultural background;**

1 None **2** A Few **3** Some **4** Many **5** Prefer not to Answer

6. **Have you studied abroad (e.g. partaking in Erasmus project)?**
   1 Yes **2** No

   <u>If yes</u>, please fill in the following information in the designated spaces:

Country of studies: ________________ Duration of studies: _______________

II. Diversity-Related Training during University Studies

1. Did you attend any diversity-related courses during your university studies?

1 Yes Total number of relevant courses attended: ____ (Go to question **1,1**)

2 No **3** Don't remember/Prefer not to answer (Go to question **3, p. 5**)

1,1. FILL IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE REGARDING THE DIVERSITY-RELATED COURSES YOU HAVE ATTENDED THROUGHOUT YOUR STUDIES:

Module Title	Mandatory (**M**)/ Elective (**E**)	Year of Attendance	Frequency of Attendance (**1**= never, **2**= very rarely, **3**= rarely, **4**= occasionally, **5**= very often, **6**= always)	Grade

1,2. For each one of the courses you mentioned above, indicate with an **'X'** which of the following elements were included (**INDICATE ALL THAT APPLY**):

1= written final exam
2 = final coursework
3 = weekly coursework (e.g. diary entries)
4 = oral presentations
5 = teaching practice in schools
6 = participation in an organization dealing with diversity issues
7 = visits from people working in organizations dealing with diversity issues
8 = visits from people with a culturally diverse background

Module Title	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**

2. Complete the following table based on your overall experience with the diversity-related courses you attended throughout your studies, indicating with an **'X'** an answer from **1 to 6,** where:

1 = disagree completely, 2 = disagree, 3 = disagree somewhat, 4 = agree somewhat, 5 = agree, 6 = agree completely

	1	2	3	4	5	6
The courses I attended helped me better understand the concept of multiculturalism.						
The courses I attended negatively influenced my opinion concerning the importance of multiculturalism for contemporary school classrooms.						
The courses I attended provided me with knowledge on how to practically deal with multiculturalism.						

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY PUTTING AN 'X' IN THE CORRESPONDING BOX

5. Complete the following table based on the overall experience from your teaching practice throughout your studies, indicating with an **'X'** an answer from **1 to 6,** where:
1= never, 2= very rarely, 3= rarely, 4= occasionally, 5= quite frequently, 6= always

	1	2	3	4	5	6
I implemented multicultural education during my teaching practice.						
The leading teacher of my classroom implemented multicultural education during his/her teaching.						
The teaching practice supervisor encouraged me to implement multicultural education during my teaching practice.						
For my teaching practice, I was assessed based on how much I implemented multicultural education during my teaching.						
Diversity was a defining characteristic of the classrooms in which I taught during my teaching practice.						

6. Complete the following table based on the overall experience from your teaching practice throughout your studies, indicating with an **'X'** an answer from **1 to 6**, where:
1 = disagree completely, 2 = disagree, 3 = disagree somewhat, 4 = agree somewhat, 5 = agree, 6 = agree completely

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teaching practice helped me practically implement my theoretical knowledge on multicultural education.						
The classrooms I taught in during my teaching practice were representative of the classrooms I will have to teach in as a future educator.						
Teaching practice helped me understand the importance of multicultural education for contemporary school classrooms.						
Teaching practice positively influenced my opinion concerning the importance of multicultural education for contemporary school classrooms.						
Teaching practice boosted my confidence regarding my ability to practically implement multicultural education.						
Teaching practice was completely unrelated to multicultural education.						
Teaching practice helped me understood that multicultural education is not necessary for contemporary school classrooms.						

III. Personal Attitudes

1. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement to the following statements, indicating with an **'X'** an answer from **1 to 6**, where:
   1 = disagree completely, 2 = disagree, 3 = disagree somewhat, 4 = agree somewhat, 5 = agree, 6 = agree completely

	1	2	3	4	5	6
I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching.						
I plan many activities to celebrate diverse cultural practices in my classroom.						
I plan school events to increase students' knowledge about cultural experiences of various racial and ethnic groups.						
My curricula integrate topics and events from racial and ethnic minority populations.						

	1	2	3	4	5	6
I make changes within the general school environment so that racial and ethnic minority students will have an equal opportunity for success.						
I consult regularly with other teachers or administrators to help me understand multicultural issues related to instruction.						
I rarely examine the instructional materials I use in the classroom for racial and ethnic bias.						
I often include examples of the experiences and perspectives of racial and ethnic groups during my classroom lessons.						
I often promote diversity by the behaviors I exhibit.						
I establish strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic minority parents.						
I am knowledgeable about particular teaching strategies that affirm the racial and ethnic identities of all students.						
I have a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy.						
I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories.						
I am knowledgeable of how historical experiences of various racial and ethnic minority groups may affect students' learning.						
I understand the various communication styles among different racial and ethnic minority students in my classroom.						
I am knowledgeable about the various community resources within the city that I teach.						
It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions.						
It is better for a country if there are a variety of different religions.						
It is better for a country if almost everyone speaks the same language.						
A country's cultural life is generally enriched by people coming to live there from other countries.						

2. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement to the following statements, indicating with an **'X'** an answer from **1 to 5**, where:
1 = disagree completely, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= agree completely

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
I find teaching a culturally diverse student group rewarding.					
Teaching methods need to be adapted to meet the needs of a culturally diverse student group.					
Sometimes I think that there is too much emphasis placed on multicultural awareness and training for teachers.					
Teachers have the responsibility to be aware of their students' cultural backgrounds.					
I frequently invite extended family members (e.g. cousins, grandparents, godparents) to attend parent-teacher conferences.					
It is not the teacher's responsibility to encourage pride in one's culture.					
As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes increasingly challenging.					
I believe that the teacher's role needs to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds.					
When dealing with bilingual children, communication styles often are interpreted as behavioural problems.					
As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes increasingly rewarding.					
I can learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds.					
Multicultural training for teachers is not necessary.					
To be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom.					
Multicultural awareness training can help me to work more effectively with a diverse student population.					
Students should learn to communicate in Greek only.					
Today's curriculum gives undue importance to multiculturalism and diversity.					

	1	2	3	4	5
I am aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds in my classroom.					
Regardless of the makeup of my class, it is important for students to be aware of multicultural diversity.					
Being multiculturally aware is not relevant for the subject I teach.					
Teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom.					

IV. Demographics

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY WRITING YOUR ANSWER IN THE CORRESPONDENT BOX

1. What is your gender? →

2. How old are you? →

3. Where were you born? →

3,1. If you were not born in Greece, how old were you when you first arrived in Greece? →

4. In which country were your parents born?

Father →

Mother →

5. What is your permanent place of residence? →

6. What is your father's occupation? →

7. What is your mother's occupation? →

9. What was the grade you achieved in the national exams? →

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY CIRCLING YOUR ANSWER

10. On a rough estimate, in which of the following categories would you place your familial income?

A. 0 – 10.000€ **B**. 10.001 – 20.000€ **Γ**. 20.001 – 30.000€ **Δ**. 30.001 – 40.000€

E. 40.001-50.000€ **ΣΤ**. Over 50.001€ **Z**. Don't know / Not answer

11. Based on the following scale, where**1=extreme right and 10=extreme left, which value do you think best represent your political orientation?**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Extreme Right **Extreme Left**

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION BY PUTTING AN 'X' IN THE CORRESPONDING BOX

12. What is your parents' educational level? Give an answer for your father and an answer for your mother.

	Father	*Mother*
α. Finished some classes of elementary school ……………………………….	☐	☐
b. Graduated from elementary school ………………………………………	☐	☐
c. Finished some classes of middle school …………………………..……	☐	☐
d. Graduated from middle school …………………………………………..…	☐	☐
e. Finished some classes of high school …...……….….....…………………..	☐	☐
f. Graduated from high school ……………………….……..………………	☐	☐
g. Graduated from a vocational training after high school …………………..	☐	☐
h. Graduated from a Higher Technological Institution (TEI) ………………...	☐	☐
i. Completed some years of Undergraduate studies …………………………	☐	☐
j. Graduated from an undergraduate program of studies ……………………	☐	☐
k. Did postgraduate studies ……………………………………………..……	☐	☐

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

Examining the Factors Influencing Greek Pre-Service Teachers' Multicultural Competence: An Explanatory, Mixed-Methods Approach

Adult Participant Information Sheet

Panagiota (Peny) Sotiropoulou, Department of Geography, Loughborough University, Loughborough, LE11 3TU, p.sotiropoulou@lboro.ac.uk, +44 (0)1509 222751

1st Supervisor: Dr Marco Antonsich, Senior Lecturer in Human Geography, Loughborough University, Loughborough, LE11 3TU, M.Antonsich@lboro.ac.uk, +44 (0)1509 222746

2nd Supervisor: Dr Elizabeth Mavroudi, Lecturer in Human Geography, Loughborough University, Loughborough, LE11 3TU, E.Mavroudi@lboro.ac.uk, +44 (0)1509 223723

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to identify the factors influencing pre-service teachers' multicultural competence in Greece so as to provide some recommendations on how teacher training departments can become more effective in producing multiculturally competent educators.

Who is doing this research and why?

This study is carried out as part of a PhD in Human Geography supported by Loughborough University. The PhD candidate and main researcher is Panagiota (Peny) Sotiropoulou and the supervisors are Dr. Marco Antonsich and Dr. Elizabeth Mavroudi.

Are there any exclusion criteria?

Yes. To participate in this study, you need to:

- Be in the final year of your undergraduate studies
- Have done teaching practice within the last semester

What will I be asked to do?

Firstly, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding your personal and student experiences with multicultural competence. Then, you will be asked to participate in a small group discussion (3-5 participants) with fellow students in order to express your opinions and experiences around multicultural competence. More specifically, you will be called to comment on your understanding of the term and its

perceived importance for primary school teachers as well as on the factors that you think play a vital role in multicultural competence's development. Focus group discussions are going to be recorded so that they can then be used for analysis.

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

Yes. After you have read this information and asked any questions you may have, you will be asked to complete an Informed Consent Form. However, if at any time, before, during or after the sessions you wish to withdraw from the study, please just contact the main investigator. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing. However, once the dissertation has been submitted (expected to be by October 2018), it will not be possible to withdraw your individual data from the research anymore.

Will I be required to attend any sessions and where will these be?

You will have to complete a questionnaire, which is going to be disseminated to you in one of your mandatory university courses. Then, you will be asked to participate in one session for the focus group discussion, in:

Central Greece: Group A: 15th of May 2017 (17:30-20:00), Group B: 18th of May 2017 (17:30-20:00)

Northern Greece: 29th of May 2017 (Group A: 12:30-14:00, Group B: 18:00-19:30)

Southern Greece: 31st of May 2017 (Group A: 13:00-14:30, Group B: 15:00-16:30)

How long will it take?

The questionnaire completion time is between 15-20 minutes and the focus group discussion is going to last no more than 2 and a half hours.

What personal information will be required from me?

You will be asked to comment on/rate scales related to:

a) your experiences with diversity before university (e.g. culturally diverse friends, travelling/studying abroad)
b) your experience of university training around multicultural competence
c) your views on national homogeneity
d) the notion of educators' multicultural competence.

Some of your socio-demographic characteristics are also going to be requested for, like gender, ethnicity and area of residence, but you will have the option to not answer, if these questions make you feel uncomfortable.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. Based on the Ethics Approval (Human Participants) Sub-committee's guidelines for investigators (http://www.lboro.ac.uk/media/wwwlboroacuk/content/universitycommittees/ethicsapprovalshumanparticipantssub-committee/Data%20Collection%20and%20Storage.pdf), only data that is necessary

for the study will be collected and it will be kept confidential. All personal information will be encoded or anonymised as far as is possible and consistent with the needs of the study. Participants will be assigned a reference number or code and data is going to be stored against this number/code rather than against the names of participants, so as to ensure that relating a particular set of data back to any given participant is not possible. Primary data will be encrypted and stored safely with appropriate back up and contingency plans in the event of loss, damage or unauthorised access to the data.

Following Loughborough University's Policy for data storage, statistical data collected through the questionnaires are going to be stored in raw data format for six years from completion of the project. As far as the focus group transcriptions and recordings are concerned, these are going to be stored in their original form or as scanned copies for ten years from completion of the project. After the aforementioned timing, data is going to be destroyed.

I have some more questions; who should I contact?

Refer directly to the main researcher of the study, Panagiota (Peny) Sotiropoulou, through email at: p.sotiropoulou@lboro.ac.uk.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the study are going to be used as part of a PhD thesis submission and may also be used in publications, reports and other research outputs.

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?

If you are not happy with how the research was conducted, please contact Ms Jackie Green, the Secretary for the University's Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee:

Ms J Green, Research Office, Hazlerigg Building, Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. Tel: 01509 222423. Email: J.A.Green@lboro.ac.uk

The University also has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which is available online at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/committees/ethics-approvals-human-participants/additionalinformation/codesofpractice/ .

Appendix E: Inform Consent Form

Examining the Factors Influencing Greek Pre-Service Teachers' Multicultural Competence: An Explanatory, Mixed-Methods Approach

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(to be completed after Participant Information Sheet has been read)

Taking Part **Please initial box**

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee. ☐

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form. ☐

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation. ☐

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study, have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing. ☐

I agree to take part in this study. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and recorded (audio). ☐

Use of Information

I understand that all the personal information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept anonymous and confidential to the researchers unless (under the statutory obligations of the agencies which the researchers are working with), it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others or for audit by regulatory authorities. ☐

I understand that anonymised quotes may be used in publications, reports and other research outputs. ☐

I agree for the data I provide to be securely archived at the end of the project. ☐

______________________	______________________	__________
Name of participant [printed]	Signature	Date
______________________	______________________	__________
Researcher [printed]	Signature	Date

Appendix F: Focus Group Prompt Sets

Set A:

(Retrieved from: http://www.newsbeast.gr/greece/arthro/601186/eniosa-perifanos-pou-kratisa-tin-elliniki-simaia)

(Retrieved from: http://www.mag24.gr/ellada-pou-mas-kani-iperifanous-simeoforos-ti-mantila-pou-kerdise-chirokrotima-tou-kosmou-foto/)

Set B:

Καμμένος: «Όχι» σε ιθαγένεια στα παιδιά δεύτερης γενιάς

[*Translation: Kammenos: "No" to citizenship for second generation children*]

(Retrieved from: http://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/448145/kammenos-de-tha-psifizoume-nomoshedia-aditheta-pros-tis-arhes-mas/)

[*Translation: Citizenship for immigrant's children*]

(Retrieved form: https://www.bladi.gr/R%C3%A9sidence%20En%20Gr%C3%A8ce/ellhnikh-ioageneia-politografhsh-akomh-kai-dyomisi-xroniah-oloklhrwsh)

Set C:

Θεοδόσης Πελεγρίνης: Θα ήθελα στα Διαπολιτισμικά Σχολεία να υπάρχουν και γηγενή Ελληνόπουλα

[*Translation: Theodosis Pelegrinis: I would like native Greek children to be present in Intercultural Schools*]

(Retrieved from: https://www.huffingtonpost.gr/2016/04/27/koinwnia-paideia-pelegrinis_n_9774330.html)

«Σχολεία μόνο για Έλληνες»

[*Translation: Schools only for Greeks*]

<<Σε κάθε όμως περίπτωση, είναι έτσι προσδιορισμένοι οι σκοποί της Δημόσιας Παιδείας στο Σύνταγμα, ώστε μόνο Έλληνες ή τουλάχιστον όσοι συνειδητά αποφασίσουν να κοινωνήσουν τους σκοπούς της ελληνικής ιδέας και παιδείας και να υιοθετήσουν την ελληνική σκέψη και διανόηση, έχουν αντικειμενικά τις προϋποθέσεις για να ενταχθούν απρόσκοπτα και αποτελεσματικά στο σύστημα της δημόσιας εκπαίδευσης [...].>>

Από Ανακοίνωση Συλλόγων Γονέων & Κηδεμόνων Ωραιοκάστρου, Φιλιππιάδας, Φθιώτιδας και Περάματος (2017)

[*Translation: 'However, in any case, the scopes of public education are defined in such a way that only Greeks or at least only those consciously deciding to espouse the scopes of the Greek ideals and education and to adopt the Greek thought and intellect that objectively have the prerequisites to be seamlessly and effectively integrated in the public education system [...]'*

From a joint announcement of the parent's associations of Oraiokastro, Filippiada, Fthiotida and Perama (2017)]

(Retrieved from: http://www.xryshaygh.com/enimerosi/view/ellhnes-goneis)

Set D:

Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ

ΕΛΛΑΔΑ

ΕΠΙΚΑΙΡΟΤΗΤΑ | ΑΠΟΨΕΙΣ | ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΑ | ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΣ | ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ | ΠΕΡΙΟΔΙΚΟ "Κ" | ΦΩΤΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ | VIDEO | ΤΑΞΙΔΙΑ | MUST | ΓΑΣΤΡΟΝΟΜΟΣ

ΕΡΕΥΝΕΣ | ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ | ΕΛΛΑΔΑ | ΚΟΣΜΟΣ | ΠΕΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΝ | ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ | ΤΕΧΝΟΛΟΓΙΑ | ΥΓΕΙΑ | ΑΘΛΗΤΙΣΜΟΣ | ΜΕ ΤΗΝ «Κ»

ΕΛΛΑΔΑ 10.04.2017

Εκπαίδευση μετ' εμποδίων για μετανάστες

ΤΑΝΙΑ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

(Retrieved from: http://www.kathimerini.gr/904517/article/epikairothta/ellada/ekpaideysh-met-empodiwn-gia-metanastes)

(Retrieved from: http://www.unpolitical.gr/2016/08/18000.html)

Appendix G: Tables and Figures from Quantitative Data Analysis

G.1. Control Variables' Characteristics

Table 1: Participants' Gender Breakdown

	Percentage
Male	13.2%
Female	86.8%
Valid n= 355	

Table 2: Participants' Country of Birth

	Percentage
Greece	95.7%
Other	4.3%
Valid n= 348	

Table 3: Participants with Ethnically Diverse Background (i.e. 1st and 2nd Generation Migrants)

	Percentage
Yes	89.9%
No	10.1%
Valid n= 356	

Table 4: Participants' Place of Residence

	Percentage
Rural/Suburban	25.5.%
Urban/Metropolitan	74.5%
Valid n= 345	

Table 5: Parental Occupational and Educational Level, Familial Income, University Entrance Grade and Political Orientation Descriptive Characteristics

	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	*Valid n*
Father's Occupation	18 - 78	44.38	11.92	334
Mother's Occupation	18 - 78	45.03	11.55	228
Familial Income	1 - 5	2.28	1.08	302
Father's Education	1 - 11	6.48	2.83	351
Mother's Education	1 - 11	6.81	2.59	351
University Entrance Grade	12.01 - 19.90	15.73	1.53	344
Political Orientation	1 - 10	5.87	1.52	338

G.2. Independent Variables' Characteristics

Table 1: Percentage of Speakers by Foreign Language

	Yes	**No**	***Valid n***
English	99.2%	0.8%	355
French	32.8%	67.2%	351
German	27.1%	72.9%	354
Italian	13%	87%	354
Spanish	7.4%	92.6%	353
Other	4%	96%	354

Table 2: Foreign Languages Spoken

	Percentage
None	0.3%
One	34.9%
Two	50.3%
Three	11.4%
Four	2.3%
Five	0.9%
Valid n= 350	

Table 3: Foreign Language Proficiency by Language Descriptive Characteristics (Scale: 0= no command, 4= excellent command)

	None	**Little**	**Good**	**Very Good**	**Excellent**	***Valid n***	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
English	0.8%	7%	28.2%	43.9%	20%	355	2.75	0.88
French	67%	19.1%	6.6.%	5.1%	2.3%	351	0.57	0.98
German	72.9%	18.1%	5.1%	3.1%	0.8%	354	0.41	0.80
Italian	87%	9%	2.8%	1.1%	0%	354	0.18	0.53
Spanish	92.7%	4%	1.7%	1.4%	0.3%	353	0.13	0.51
Other	96%	1.7%	1.4%	0.8%	0%	354	0.07	0.38

Table 4: Experience of Travelling Abroad Descriptive Characteristics (Scale: 1= none, 4= very much)

	None	**Little**	**Much**	**Very Much**	***Valid n***	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Within Europe	33.4%	45%	15.6%	5.9%	353	1.93	0.86
Outside Europe	80.9%	13.8%	3.8%	1.5%	340	1.25	0.58

Table 5: Difference between Travelling within and Outside Europe

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Experience of travel abroad within Europe & Experience of travel abroad outside Europe	339	.301	.000

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Experience of travel abroad within Europe - Experience of travel abroad outside Europe	.67847	.88370	.04800	.58406	.77287	14.136	338	.000

Table 6: Study Abroad Experience

	Percentage
Yes	6.5%
No	93.5%
Valid n= 356	

Table 7: Differences in Diversity-Related Modules Attended across Departments

ANOVA

Total sum of courses attended

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	144.456	2	72.228	83.256	.000
Within Groups	262.864	303	.868		
Total	407.320	305			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Total sum of courses attended

Bonferroni

(I) Department	(J) Department	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Central	North	.32930*	.13049	.036	.0152	.6434
	South	-1.32211*	.12678	.000	-1.6273	-1.0169
North	Central	-.32930*	.13049	.036	-.6434	-.0152
	South	-1.65141*	.13863	.000	-1.9851	-1.3177
South	Central	1.32211*	.12678	.000	1.0169	1.6273
	North	1.65141*	.13863	.000	1.3177	1.9851

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 8: Differences of Diverse Elements Included in Diversity-Related Modules Attended across Departments

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	60.782	2	30.391	25.425	.000
Within Groups	351.427	294	1.195		
Total	412.209	296			

Multiple Comparisons

Bonferroni

(I) Department	(J) Department	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Central	North	.19729	.15394	.603	-.1734	.5679
	South	-.88985*	.15241	.000	-1.2568	-.5229
North	Central	-.19729	.15394	.603	-.5679	.1734
	South	-1.08714*	.16532	.000	-1.4852	-.6891
South	Central	.88985*	.15241	.000	.5229	1.2568
	North	1.08714*	.16532	.000	.6891	1.4852

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 9: Differences in the Factor of Diversity-Related Modules Attended across Departments

ANOVA

Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)		82.941	2	41.471	57.226	.000
	Linear Term	Unweighted	54.689	1	54.689	75.465	.000
		Weighted	47.848	1	47.848	66.026	.000
		Deviation	35.094	1	35.094	48.426	.000
Within Groups			213.059	294	.725		
Total			296.000	296			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended

Bonferroni

(I) Department	(J) Department	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Central	North	.24517834	.11986111	.125	-.0434181	.5337748
	South	-1.03089861*	.11867031	.000	-1.3166279	-.7451693
North	Central	-.24517834	.11986111	.125	-.5337748	.0434181
	South	-1.27607695*	.12872135	.000	-1.5860067	-.9661472
South	Central	1.03089861*	.11867031	.000	.7451693	1.3166279
	North	1.27607695*	.12872135	.000	.9661472	1.5860067

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 10: Differences in Perceived Relevance of Multicultural Education to Teaching Practicum across Departments

ANOVA

WEIGHED_TOTALPERINCLDIVTEACHPR

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)		15.346	2	7.673	7.903	.000
	Linear Term	Unweighted	2.553	1	2.553	2.630	.106
		Weighted	3.134	1	3.134	3.228	.073
		Deviation	12.212	1	12.212	12.578	.000
Within Groups			331.071	341	.971		
Total			346.416	343			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: WEIGHED_TOTALPERINCLDIVTEACHPR

Bonferroni

(I) Department	(J) Department	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Central	North	.51813*	.13042	.000	.2044	.8319
	South	.20542	.12667	.317	-.0993	.5102
North	Central	-.51813*	.13042	.000	-.8319	-.2044
	South	-.31271	.13585	.066	-.6395	.0141
South	Central	-.20542	.12667	.317	-.5102	.0993
	North	.31271	.13585	.066	-.0141	.6395

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

G.3. Dependent Variable Characteristics

<u>Table 1: Differences in Multicultural Competence's and Its Sub-scales' Mean Score across Departments</u>

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Factor Multicultural Competence	Between Groups	4,468	2	2,234	2,253	,107
	Within Groups	293,532	296	,992		
	Total	298,000	298			
MEAN_SUM_MTS	Between Groups	4,437	2	2,218	3,813	,023
	Within Groups	194,284	334	,582		
	Total	198,721	336			
MEAN_SUM_TMAS	Between Groups	,156	2	,078	,400	,671
	Within Groups	61,604	315	,196		
	Total	61,760	317			
MEAN_SUM_MTK	Between Groups	4,422	2	2,211	3,247	,040
	Within Groups	228,794	336	,681		
	Total	233,216	338			

Multiple Comparisons

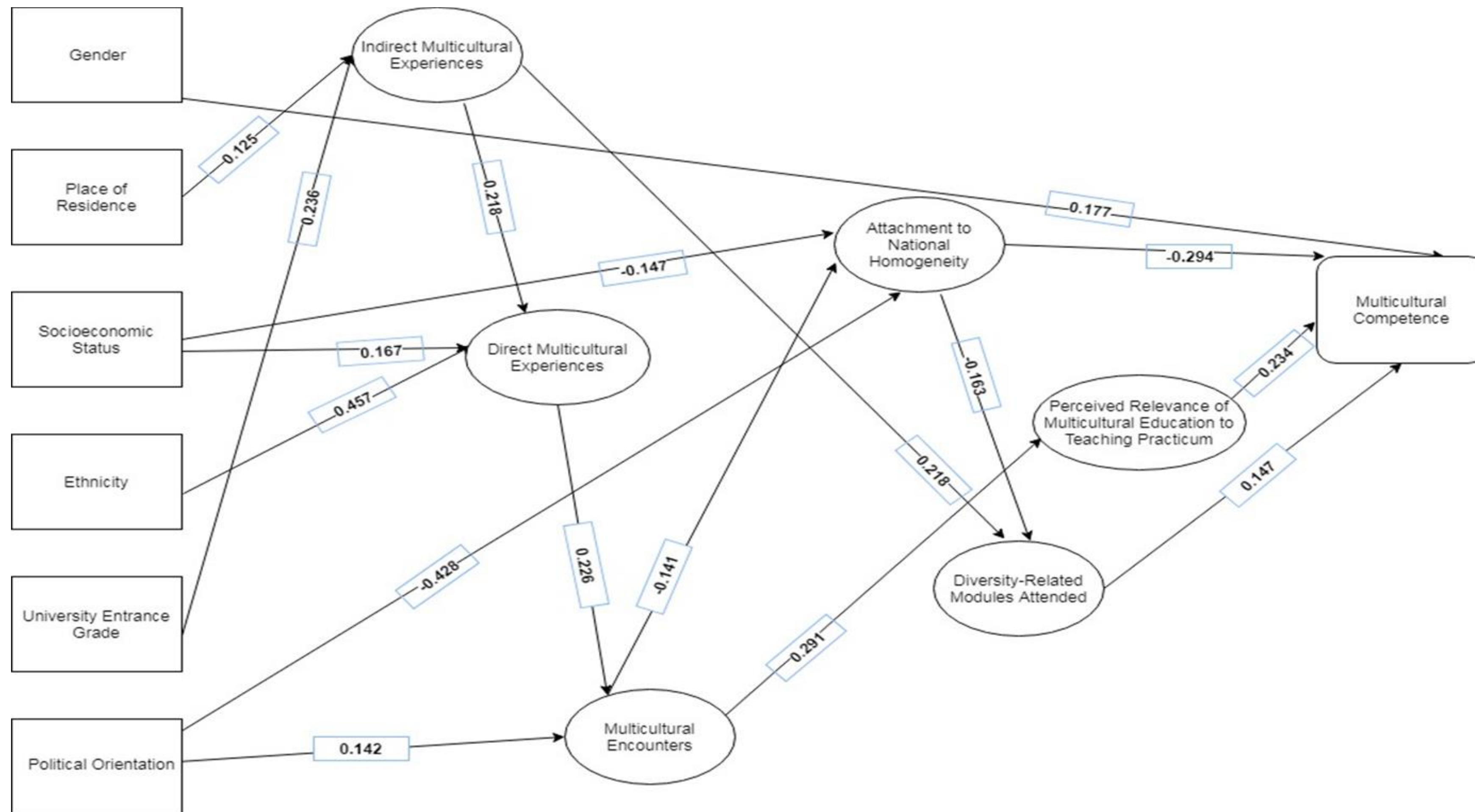
Bonferroni

Dependent Variable	(I) Department	(J) Department	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Factor Multicultural Competence	Central	North	-,28404281	,13867471	,124	-,6179249	,0498393
		South	-,19324359	,13955487	,502	-,5292448	,1427576
	North	Central	,28404281	,13867471	,124	-,0498393	,6179249
		South	,09079923	,14845757	1,000	-,2666367	,4482351
	South	Central	,19324359	,13955487	,502	-,1427576	,5292448
		North	-,09079923	,14845757	1,000	-,4482351	,2666367
MEAN_SUM_MTS	Central	North	-,27831*	,10088	,018	-,5210	-,0356
		South	-,11092	,10007	,806	-,3517	,1299
	North	Central	,27831*	,10088	,018	,0356	,5210
		South	,16739	,10603	,346	-,0877	,4225
	South	Central	,11092	,10007	,806	-,1299	,3517
		North	-,16739	,10603	,346	-,4225	,0877
MEAN_SUM_TMAS	Central	North	-,04740	,06016	1,000	-,1922	,0974
		South	,00300	,05961	1,000	-,1405	,1465
	North	Central	,04740	,06016	1,000	-,0974	,1922
		South	,05040	,06434	1,000	-,1045	,2053
	South	Central	-,00300	,05961	1,000	-,1465	,1405
		North	-,05040	,06434	1,000	-,2053	,1045
MEAN_SUM_MTK	Central	North	-,07184	,10891	1,000	-,3339	,1902
		South	-,26959*	,10773	,038	-,5288	-,0104
	North	Central	,07184	,10891	1,000	-,1902	,3339
		South	-,19775	,11501	,259	-,4745	,0790
	South	Central	,26959*	,10773	,038	,0104	,5288
		North	,19775	,11501	,259	-,0790	,4745

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

G.4. Multicultural Competence Model

Figure 1: The Path Model Including Only the Statistically Significant Effects of the Variables Using Standardised Path Coefficients



G.5. SPSS Outputs

G.5.1. SPSS Output Representing the Direct Effects

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.580[a]	.336	.283	.85872326

a. Predictors: (Constant), Scale Perceived Inclusion of Dievrsity in Teaching Practice, University Entrance Overall Grade, Direct Multicultural Experiences, Political Orientation, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Culturally Diverse Friends, Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.333	12	4.694	6.366	.000[b]
	Residual	111.348	151	.737		
	Total	167.682	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Scale Perceived Inclusion of Dievrsity in Teaching Practice, University Entrance Overall Grade, Direct Multicultural Experiences, Political Orientation, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Culturally Diverse Friends, Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.957	.974		.983	.327	-.966	2.881		
	Gender	.516	.201	.177	2.561	.011	.118	.914	.919	1.088
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.186	.161	-.082	-1.155	.250	-.503	.132	.874	1.144
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	-.216	.271	-.060	-.798	.426	-.752	.320	.783	1.278
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	-.019	.077	-.018	-.251	.802	-.171	.132	.851	1.176
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.080	.046	-.120	-1.735	.085	-.171	.011	.926	1.080
	Political Orientation	.018	.054	.026	.326	.745	-.089	.124	.699	1.431
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.092	.074	.091	1.242	.216	-.054	.237	.815	1.227
	Direct Multicultural Experiences	.152	.085	.144	1.792	.075	-.016	.319	.681	1.469
	Culturally Diverse Friends	.088	.103	.064	.856	.393	-.116	.293	.777	1.287
	Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity	-.080	.022	-.294	-3.631	.000	-.124	-.037	.672	1.489
	Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended	.148	.072	.147	2.054	.042	.006	.290	.863	1.159
	Scale Perceived Inclusion of Dievrsity in Teaching Practice	.026	.008	.234	3.259	.001	.010	.041	.853	1.173

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

G.5.2. SPSS Outputs Representing the Total Effects (Reduced Form Equations)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.361[a]	.131	.079	8.90047

a. Predictors: (Constant), Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended, Direct Multicultural Experiences, Political Orientation, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, University Entrance Overall Grade, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Culturally Diverse Friends, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2189.665	11	199.060	2.513	.006[b]
	Residual	14576.172	184	79.218		
	Total	16765.837	195			

a. Dependent Variable: Scale Perceived Inclusion of Dievrsity in Teaching Practice

b. Predictors: (Constant), Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended, Direct Multicultural Experiences, Political Orientation, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, University Entrance Overall Grade, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Culturally Diverse Friends, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	27.936	8.750		3.193	.002	10.673	45.199		
	Gender	.486	1.972	.017	.246	.806	-3.405	4.377	.967	1.034
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.278	1.462	-.014	-.191	.849	-3.162	2.605	.937	1.067
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	-2.541	2.601	-.075	-.977	.330	-7.673	2.590	.797	1.255
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	-.877	.725	-.089	-1.209	.228	-2.308	.554	.875	1.143
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.108	.435	-.018	-.249	.804	-.967	.750	.901	1.110
	Political Orientation	-.080	.491	-.013	-.163	.871	-1.048	.888	.737	1.357
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	-.417	.715	-.046	-.583	.561	-1.828	.994	.772	1.296
	Direct Multicultural Experiences	.132	.821	.014	.161	.872	-1.487	1.752	.674	1.484
	Culturally Diverse Friends	3.565	.912	.291	3.907	.000	1.764	5.365	.851	1.175
	Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity	-.331	.207	-.131	-1.598	.112	-.739	.078	.701	1.426
	Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended	.746	.661	.084	1.128	.261	-.558	2.050	.861	1.162

a. Dependent Variable: Scale Perceived Inclusion of Dievrsity in Teaching Practice

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.375[a]	.140	.095	.97803366

a. Predictors: (Constant), Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity, University Entrance Overall Grade, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Culturally Diverse Friends, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Political Orientation, Direct Multicultural Experiences

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.649	10	2.965	3.100	.001[b]
	Residual	181.744	190	.957		
	Total	211.393	200			

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended

b. Predictors: (Constant), Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity, University Entrance Overall Grade, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Culturally Diverse Friends, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Political Orientation, Direct Multicultural Experiences

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.778	.953		-.817	.415	-2.657	1.101		
	Gender	.114	.213	.037	.534	.594	-.306	.533	.965	1.036
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.126	.158	-.055	-.801	.424	-.437	.185	.943	1.060
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	.182	.280	.049	.650	.516	-.370	.734	.784	1.275
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	.109	.078	.100	1.396	.164	-.045	.264	.886	1.128
	University Entrance Overall Grade	.083	.047	.124	1.768	.079	-.010	.176	.920	1.087
	Political Orientation	-.058	.054	-.085	-1.088	.278	-.164	.047	.743	1.347
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.223	.076	.218	2.926	.004	.073	.373	.817	1.223
	Direct Multicultural Experiences	-.161	.089	-.148	-1.813	.071	-.337	.014	.679	1.474
	Culturally Diverse Friends	.176	.099	.128	1.770	.078	-.020	.372	.866	1.154
	Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity	-.046	.022	-.163	-2.060	.041	-.090	-.002	.721	1.387

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.527[a]	.278	.249	3.06346

a. Predictors: (Constant), Culturally Diverse Friends, Gender, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, University Entrance Overall Grade, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Place of Residence Dummy, Political Orientation, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Direct Multicultural Experiences

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	805.676	9	89.520	9.539	.000[b]
	Residual	2092.805	223	9.385		
	Total	2898.481	232			

a. Dependent Variable: Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Culturally Diverse Friends, Gender, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, University Entrance Overall Grade, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Place of Residence Dummy, Political Orientation, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Direct Multicultural Experiences

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	19.850	2.447		8.112	.000	15.028	24.673		
	Gender	.973	.615	.091	1.582	.115	-.239	2.185	.977	1.024
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.014	.466	-.002	-.029	.977	-.933	.906	.929	1.076
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	-.292	.798	-.024	-.366	.714	-1.864	1.280	.740	1.351
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	-.566	.228	-.147	-2.480	.014	-1.016	-.116	.916	1.092
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.088	.140	-.037	-.631	.529	-.365	.188	.919	1.088
	Political Orientation	-1.038	.142	-.428	-7.296	.000	-1.318	-.758	.939	1.065
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.066	.220	.019	.300	.765	-.367	.499	.830	1.205
	Direct Multicultural Experiences	-.134	.260	-.036	-.514	.608	-.647	.379	.643	1.556
	Culturally Diverse Friends	-.674	.289	-.141	-2.332	.021	-1.244	-.105	.891	1.123

a. Dependent Variable: Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.333[a]	.111	.080	.70188

a. Predictors: (Constant), Direct Multicultural Experiences, University Entrance Overall Grade, Gender, Political Orientation, Place of Residence Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.203	8	1.775	3.604	.001[b]
	Residual	113.797	231	.493		
	Total	128.000	239			

a. Dependent Variable: Culturally Diverse Friends

b. Predictors: (Constant), Direct Multicultural Experiences, University Entrance Overall Grade, Gender, Political Orientation, Place of Residence Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.921	.549		1.676	.095	-.162	2.003		
	Gender	-.053	.138	-.024	-.386	.700	-.325	.219	.984	1.017
	Place of Residence Dummy	.138	.104	.085	1.327	.186	-.067	.343	.932	1.072
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	-.169	.182	-.067	-.926	.355	-.527	.190	.744	1.345
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	.035	.051	.045	.683	.495	-.066	.136	.907	1.103
	University Entrance Overall Grade	.042	.031	.085	1.323	.187	-.020	.103	.927	1.079
	Political Orientation	.070	.031	.142	2.242	.026	.008	.131	.962	1.039
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.046	.049	.065	.952	.342	-.049	.142	.830	1.205
	Direct Multicultural Experiences	.173	.058	.226	2.964	.003	.058	.288	.663	1.508

a. Dependent Variable: Culturally Diverse Friends

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.580[a]	.336	.316	.78839018

a. Predictors: (Constant), Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Gender, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Political Orientation, University Entrance Overall Grade, Place of Residence Dummy

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	73.418	7	10.488	16.874	.000[b]
	Residual	144.823	233	.622		
	Total	218.241	240			

a. Dependent Variable: Direct Multicultural Experiences

b. Predictors: (Constant), Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Gender, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Political Orientation, University Entrance Overall Grade, Place of Residence Dummy

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.317	.612		.518	.605	-.889	1.523		
	Gender	.181	.152	.064	1.186	.237	-.119	.481	.991	1.009
	Place of Residence Dummy	.085	.117	.040	.726	.469	-.145	.315	.934	1.071
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	1.510	.179	.457	8.446	.000	1.158	1.863	.972	1.029
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	.172	.057	.167	3.042	.003	.061	.283	.943	1.061
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.043	.035	-.068	-1.242	.216	-.111	.025	.937	1.067
	Political Orientation	-.013	.035	-.020	-.366	.715	-.081	.056	.961	1.040
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.203	.053	.218	3.840	.000	.099	.307	.886	1.129

a. Dependent Variable: Direct Multicultural Experiences

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.340[a]	.116	.094	.97908621

a. Predictors: (Constant), Political Orientation, Place of Residence Dummy, Gender, University Entrance Overall Grade, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.685	6	5.114	5.335	.000[b]
	Residual	234.859	245	.959		
	Total	265.545	251			

a. Dependent Variable: Indirect Multicultural Experiences

b. Predictors: (Constant), Political Orientation, Place of Residence Dummy, Gender, University Entrance Overall Grade, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-3.100	.721		-4.303	.000	-4.520	-1.681		
	Gender	-.065	.186	-.021	-.348	.728	-.432	.302	.988	1.012
	Place of Residence Dummy	.287	.141	.125	2.042	.042	.010	.564	.959	1.043
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	.359	.215	.101	1.665	.097	-.066	.783	.988	1.012
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	.074	.068	.068	1.097	.274	-.059	.208	.939	1.065
	University Entrance Overall Grade	.160	.041	.236	3.901	.000	.079	.240	.985	1.016
	Political Orientation	.079	.042	.114	1.876	.062	-.004	.162	.974	1.027

a. Dependent Variable: Indirect Multicultural Experiences

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.319[a]	.102	.076	.96111366

a. Predictors: (Constant), Political Orientation, University Entrance Overall Grade, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.573	6	3.595	3.892	.001[b]
	Residual	190.290	206	.924		
	Total	211.863	212			

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Political Orientation, University Entrance Overall Grade, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.444	.775		-.572	.568	-1.971	1.084		
	Gender	.576	.189	.204	3.048	.003	.203	.948	.978	1.023
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.066	.153	-.029	-.430	.667	-.368	.236	.940	1.063
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	.178	.227	.052	.784	.434	-.270	.626	.988	1.012
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	.015	.073	.014	.208	.835	-.128	.158	.927	1.079
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.051	.044	-.076	-1.147	.253	-.138	.037	.991	1.009
	Political Orientation	.135	.046	.199	2.963	.003	.045	.225	.964	1.037

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.331[a]	.109	.079	.96491024

a. Predictors: (Constant), Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Gender, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Political Orientation, University Entrance Overall Grade, Place of Residence Dummy

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.114	7	3.302	3.546	.001[b]
	Residual	188.072	202	.931		
	Total	211.186	209			

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Gender, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Political Orientation, University Entrance Overall Grade, Place of Residence Dummy

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.222	.812		-.273	.785	-1.822	1.379		
	Gender	.558	.190	.197	2.933	.004	.183	.933	.974	1.026
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.087	.157	-.038	-.551	.583	-.397	.223	.917	1.090
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	.172	.228	.050	.755	.451	-.278	.622	.988	1.012
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	.014	.073	.013	.185	.853	-.130	.157	.927	1.079
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.062	.046	-.092	-1.350	.178	-.152	.029	.943	1.061
	Political Orientation	.130	.046	.192	2.821	.005	.039	.222	.952	1.051
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.091	.068	.093	1.337	.183	-.043	.225	.908	1.102

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.380[a]	.144	.109	.94537025

a. Predictors: (Constant), Direct Multicultural Experiences, University Entrance Overall Grade, Political Orientation, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.825	8	3.603	4.032	.000[b]
	Residual	170.701	191	.894		
	Total	199.527	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Direct Multicultural Experiences, University Entrance Overall Grade, Political Orientation, Gender, Place of Residence Dummy, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.474	.812		-.584	.560	-2.075	1.127		
	Gender	.496	.191	.177	2.605	.010	.121	.872	.965	1.036
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.123	.158	-.055	-.779	.437	-.436	.189	.894	1.118
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	-.174	.261	-.051	-.669	.504	-.688	.340	.765	1.307
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	-.023	.076	-.021	-.304	.762	-.172	.126	.906	1.104
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.050	.046	-.074	-1.080	.282	-.141	.041	.945	1.058
	Political Orientation	.159	.047	.234	3.410	.001	.067	.250	.953	1.050
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.041	.071	.042	.582	.561	-.098	.180	.858	1.166
	Direct Multicultural Experiences	.203	.087	.189	2.346	.020	.032	.374	.688	1.454

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.413[a]	.170	.131	.93388381

a. Predictors: (Constant), Culturally Diverse Friends, Gender, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, University Entrance Overall Grade, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Political Orientation, Place of Residence Dummy, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Direct Multicultural Experiences

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.861	9	3.762	4.314	.000[b]
	Residual	164.834	189	.872		
	Total	198.695	198			

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Culturally Diverse Friends, Gender, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, University Entrance Overall Grade, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Political Orientation, Place of Residence Dummy, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Direct Multicultural Experiences

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.753	.817		-.922	.358	-2.366	.859		
	Gender	.507	.191	.179	2.655	.009	.130	.884	.964	1.037
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.150	.157	-.067	-.960	.338	-.460	.159	.892	1.122
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	-.116	.259	-.034	-.450	.654	-.626	.394	.759	1.317
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	-.022	.075	-.020	-.290	.772	-.169	.126	.905	1.104
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.057	.047	-.084	-1.225	.222	-.150	.035	.937	1.068
	Political Orientation	.141	.046	.208	3.041	.003	.050	.233	.935	1.070
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.028	.070	.029	.398	.691	-.110	.166	.851	1.175
	Direct Multicultural Experiences	.159	.087	.148	1.821	.070	-.013	.331	.661	1.513
	Culturally Diverse Friends	.253	.097	.180	2.593	.010	.060	.445	.910	1.099

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.488[a]	.238	.197	.89989353

a. Predictors: (Constant), Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity, University Entrance Overall Grade, Gender, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Place of Residence Dummy, Culturally Diverse Friends, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Political Orientation, Direct Multicultural Experiences

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.133	10	4.713	5.820	.000[b]
	Residual	150.624	186	.810		
	Total	197.758	196			

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity, University Entrance Overall Grade, Gender, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, Place of Residence Dummy, Culturally Diverse Friends, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Political Orientation, Direct Multicultural Experiences

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.108	.905		1.225	.222	-.677	2.894		
	Gender	.597	.190	.208	3.143	.002	.222	.972	.933	1.072
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.178	.154	-.079	-1.154	.250	-.482	.126	.870	1.149
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	-.184	.250	-.054	-.736	.463	-.677	.309	.756	1.323
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	-.061	.073	-.057	-.837	.403	-.205	.083	.884	1.131
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.065	.045	-.095	-1.444	.150	-.154	.024	.937	1.068
	Political Orientation	.038	.052	.054	.725	.469	-.065	.140	.740	1.351
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.031	.070	.031	.449	.654	-.107	.170	.836	1.197
	Direct Multicultural Experiences	.168	.084	.157	1.991	.048	.002	.334	.662	1.510
	Culturally Diverse Friends	.195	.095	.139	2.053	.041	.008	.383	.888	1.127
	Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity	-.089	.021	-.313	-4.151	.000	-.131	-.047	.722	1.386

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.532[a]	.283	.232	.88045248

a. Predictors: (Constant), Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended, Political Orientation, Place of Residence Dummy, Gender, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, University Entrance Overall Grade, Culturally Diverse Friends, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity, Direct Multicultural Experiences

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.658	11	4.333	5.589	.000[b]
	Residual	120.931	156	.775		
	Total	168.588	167			

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended, Political Orientation, Place of Residence Dummy, Gender, Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy, University Entrance Overall Grade, Culturally Diverse Friends, REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES, Indirect Multicultural Experiences, Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity, Direct Multicultural Experiences

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.690	.962		1.756	.081	-.211	3.590		
	Gender	.489	.202	.171	2.421	.017	.090	.889	.922	1.084
	Place of Residence Dummy	-.172	.162	-.077	-1.067	.287	-.492	.147	.877	1.140
	Ethnically Divesre Background Dummy	-.202	.271	-.057	-.745	.458	-.737	.334	.772	1.295
	REPLACING MISSING VALUES SES	-.037	.077	-.035	-.482	.631	-.189	.115	.865	1.156
	University Entrance Overall Grade	-.081	.047	-.122	-1.735	.085	-.174	.011	.933	1.072
	Political Orientation	.007	.055	.011	.135	.893	-.101	.116	.699	1.430
	Indirect Multicultural Experiences	.066	.075	.066	.887	.376	-.082	.215	.822	1.216
	Direct Multicultural Experiences	.157	.086	.150	1.810	.072	-.014	.327	.673	1.487
	Culturally Diverse Friends	.192	.101	.139	1.897	.060	-.008	.391	.855	1.170
	Scale Attachment to National Homogeneity	-.089	.022	-.325	-3.971	.000	-.133	-.044	.687	1.457
	Factor Diversity-Related Courses Attended	.163	.074	.162	2.214	.028	.018	.308	.863	1.159

a. Dependent Variable: Factor Multicultural Competence

Appendix H: Focus Group Discussion Information – Numbering, Place and Participant Information

Focus Group 1 (conducted in a big city of Central Greece, in the Primary Education Departmental café)

Participant Information:

Panos is a Greek male, brought up in small town in Southern Greece. He has some critical thoughts on attachment to national homogeneity as generated by grand narratives, perceiving the Greek mainstream as nationalistic and xenophobic. He is open towards diversity integration and citizenship granting to second generation migrants. He has undertaken one diversity-related module, which he passed through a successful final exam, without attending the module sessions. He lacks in bringing up concrete examples of multicultural education implementation but is willing to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. He feels unprepared to address multicultural classrooms and reports no experience of multicultural education implementation in his teaching practice.

Natasa is a Greek female, brought up in big city in Southern Greece. She claims to be a supporter of interculturalism but her discourse reveals assimilationist tendencies in terms of diversity inclusion. She has attended two diversity-related modules and does her thesis on intercultural education and RE teaching. She feels relatively unprepared to teach in multicultural classrooms and reports no multicultural education implementation experience from her teaching practice.

Anna is a female of Greek-Lebanese descent, born and raised in a Greek metropolitan city. She is a proponent of diversity integration, self-aware of how racism works as an exclusionary practice through personal experience. She reflects upon structures perpetuating Greekness as a norm like the educational curricula, placing an emphasis on the role of educators in assisting culturally diverse students' learning. In general, her discourse reveals a social justice orientation. She does not feel prepared to address multicultural classrooms. She has attended two diversity-related modules and mentions one of them as the best course she has attended throughout her university studies. She reports being restricted in terms of teaching activities planning and implementation by her leading classroom teacher and has no experience of multicultural education implementation

Theano is a Greek female, brought up in big city in Central Greece. She is generally open towards diversity. She mentions having a lot of culturally diverse friends, as the place she comes from borders with Albania, and remembers being criticised for that by her surroundings but never from her family. She supports diversity integration although she struggles with coming up with concrete suggestions towards this direction. She has attended two diversity-related modules. She found the content of one of them enlightening, mentioning as an example a literature review research she conducted as part of it on minority populations in Greece. However, she reports lack of practical implementation skills in terms of the knowledge she gained from the module and perceives her teaching practice settings as mostly homogenous.

Focus Group 2 (conducted in a big city in Central Greece, in a downtown café)

Participant Information:

Maria is a Greek female, brought up in a village in Northern Greece. She is open towards diversity integration and citizenship granting to second generation migrants, although she sometimes implies integration as compliance to norms and traditions of the dominant culture. She expresses willingness to teach in multicultural classrooms but reports missing skills to practically implement multicultural education in her everyday practice. She has attended one diversity-related module. She strongly supports the benefit of multicultural education for both Greek and ethnically diverse students. Finally, she mentions being exposed to culturally diverse students in her current teaching practice and working upon multicultural education implementation with the support of her classroom leading teacher.

Efstathia is a Greek female, brought up in a village in Southern Greece. Her discourse hints a preference for preserving 'Greekness' in terms of religion, language and culture, although she claims to be open to diversity. In terms of culturally diverse students, she supports classroom exclusion in cases of language difficulties. She reports no practical experience of implementing multicultural education, although she is currently placed in an intercultural school. She perceives her class as homogenous, although there are at least 2 students with ethnically diverse background in it. She has attended one diversity-related module and reports more gains from that compared to her teaching practice in terms of multicultural competence.

Lia is a Greek female, brought up in a large city in Central Greece. She reports transformation in her attitudes against diversity, from not wanting to make friends with Albanian people living in her area as a kid to having lots of culturally diverse friends now. She is very reflective in terms of the significant others who cultivated and transformed her attitudes towards diversity. She supports the inclusion of culturally diverse students in regular classrooms under any circumstances as a way to facilitate their sense of belonging. She has applied to participate in an ERASMUS study-abroad program for the coming year, as a way to experience a new culture and broaden her horizons. She has attended one diversity-related module, which she found thought-provoking and interesting but detached from the teaching practice which started 3 years later. She does not feel prepared to address multicultural classrooms but mentions a very supportive leading teacher in her current placement, experienced in multicultural education, who helps her to design and implement learning activities for assisting learning of two students that face language difficulties.

Focus Group 3 (conducted in a big city on Northern Greece, in a desk space set-up by the Primary Education Departmental library)

Participant Information:

Valmira is a female, born in Albania and residing with her family in a big city of a Greek island. She is a proponent of assimilation in terms of diversity integration in the Greek society, highlighting the need to accept and follow the culture of the host country. She agrees with citizenship granting, only if migrants wish to remain to the host country. She has attended all diversity-related courses available in her department and has designed a portfolio of learning activities for bilingual students as part of one of these. She reports experience of teaching in multicultural classroom. Having participated in a festival of Applied Sciences organised by the university, she was placed to teach in a classroom consisted of five Roma students where she implemented multicultural education. In general, she conceives multicultural education relevant only when culturally diverse students are present.

Sophie is a Greek female, brought up in a small town in Northern Greece. She recognises a strong connection between the idea of 'Greekness' and Orthodox religion. Her discourse hints towards assimilation in terms of diversity integration, although she mentions the importance of multicultural education for both perceived homogenous and multicultural classrooms. She has undertaken only one diversity-related module, which she passed through

a successful final exam, without attending the module sessions. She mentions no experience with diversity or multicultural education implementation during her teaching practice and feels unprepared to address multicultural classrooms.

Tasia is a Greek female, brought up in a metropolitan city in Greece. She makes a very bold claim revealing exclusionary views in terms of migrants' belonging in the Greek society. She also mentions memories of avoiding Albanian classmate in her primary school classroom influenced by parental racist discourse. She also remembers having a lot of culturally diverse classmates in her high school years and mentions getting along well with them. She supports excluding culturally diverse students facing language difficulties during Language Teaching and merging them back with the regular classroom during modules of 'lower importance'. In general, she perceives multicultural education as an extra burden for the educator. She has undertaken only one diversity-related module, which she passed through sitting a final exam, without attending the sessions delivered or reading the course material. She mentions no experience with diversity or multicultural education implementation during her teaching practice and feels unprepared to address multicultural classrooms.

Litsa is a Greek female, brought up in a big city in Central Greece. In general, she kept a low profile during the discussion, making limited contributions, and adapting neutral views. She has attended one diversity-related module, feels unprepared to address multicultural classrooms and mentions no experience with diversity or multicultural education implementation during her teaching practice.

Victoria is a Greek female, brought up in a big city in Northern Greece. She holds exclusionary views toward diversity integration in the Greek society, being attached to the idea of the homogenous Greek nation based on Greek language and Orthodox religion. She mentions memories of exclusion of an Albanian classmate she had in primary school without being able to pinpoint who generated this attitude. She then mentions developing a friendship with a Russian repatriated classmate in high school, to which her parents were opposed to but finally accepted it through getting to know him and his family through school community festivities organised by the headmaster every two months. She mentions the need to change educational curricula but in terms of delivery methods, not content. She supports excluding culturally diverse students that face language difficulties during 'core' modules (e.g.

Language, History) and merging them back with the regular classroom during modules of 'lower importance' (e.g. Arts, PE)

<u>Focus Group 4</u> (conducted in a big city in Northern Greece, in a desk space set-up by the Primary Education Departmental library)

Participant Information:

Jimis is a Greek male, brought up in a big city in Northern Greece. He is a vocal supporter of diversity inclusion and highlights the mainstream's fixation with homogeneity in terms of perceived 'Greekness'. He supports the need to integrate culturally diverse students in the classroom and brings up the relevance of multicultural education for all students. He has attended one diversity-related module, which he found very useful, as it made him discover and reflect upon his attitudes towards diversity, while also provided him with practical classroom strategies that could facilitate integration. He also mentioned having planned a teaching session for a multicultural classroom as part of the module he attended, which he did not have the chance to implement, as no diversity was present in his teaching classroom and the leading teacher did not encourage him to implement multicultural education. He feels mostly unprepared to address multicultural classrooms.

Toula is a Greek female, brought up in a Greek metropolitan city. She is a vocal supporter of diversity integration both in society and in classroom. She has critical insights on what might hinder culturally diverse students' learning. She is also very reflective in terms of her teaching practice and the negative impact that the lack of multicultural education implementation might had on her Roma student and the rest of the classroom. She criticises the ethnocentrism of Greek educational curricula and highlights the educator's responsibility for the integration and learning of culturally diverse students in the classroom. She has attended one diversity-related course.

Tzeni is a Greek female, brought up in a big city in Northern Greece. She is open to diversity inclusion both in society and classroom. She criticises the ethnocentrism of Greek curricula. She has attended one diversity-related module, for which she did a research project based on interviewing primary school teachers on issues of bilingualism in the classroom. This research project has been beneficial for her as it made her think about what the current challenges educators face in the classroom are and what she could come up with in order to

address them, if she was in that position. She reports having no experience of practical multicultural education implementation and no culturally diverse students present in her teaching practice classroom.

Giouli is a Greek female, brought up in a big city in Northern Greece. She supports diversity integration in society but, in terms of classroom integration, she is in favour of excluding culturally diverse students with language difficulties from regular classrooms. She has attended one diversity-related module that she perceived useful in terms of introducing her to textbooks that she could use to teach culturally diverse students. However, she does not feel prepared to address multicultural classroom, not having relevant experience during her teaching practice.

Elena is a Greek female, brought up in a Greek metropolitan city. She is older than the average participant age as she is now studying her second undergraduate degree. She is open towards diversity inclusion in both society and education, praising multicultural education as important for all students. She has attended one diversity-related module, for which she had to design a portfolio of learning activities for bilingual students. She reports having implemented multicultural education in her teaching practice through combining music and geography to introduce her students to some other cultures, outside Europe. She mentions that the leading classroom teacher in the classroom she was placed at never deviated from covering the curricula content, omitting Arts and Music to cover gaps in Maths and Language teaching and never implemented multicultural activities.

Focus Group 5 (conducted in a big city in Southern Greece, in a Primary Education Departmental lecture room)

Participant Information:

Pepi is a Greek female, brought up in a Greek metropolitan city. She is very vocal about the need for diversity integration in both the society and classroom. She is critical regarding the structures that might inhibit culturally diverse students' learning. She is self-aware regarding her responsibility as a teacher to assist learning for all and promote social justice. She has attended diversity-related modules, which she thought were a good initial step towards multicultural competence acquisition. However, she mentioned no progress on this domain after the modules due to the lack of relevant practical implementation opportunities. She

understands the importance of multicultural education for all students and comes up with creative ideas into how she could address a multicultural classroom.

Malena is a Greek female, brought up in a small town in Southern Greece. She is open towards diversity but also talks about the need for criteria for migrants' citizenship acquisition, although she cannot come up with concrete examples of what these might be. In terms of the education of culturally diverse students, she supports exclusion of students facing linguistic difficulties in separate tutorial classes until they reach the level of the regular classroom. However, she accepts the need for multicultural education even in perceived homogenous classrooms. She has attended diversity-related modules that she found theoretically sound but lacking in connection with teaching practice. So, not having been exposed to any culturally diverse student through her teaching practice and not having implemented multicultural education, she feels unprepared to address a multicultural classroom.

Athina is a Greek female, brought up in a big city in Central Greece. She is attached to the idea of a homogenous Greek nation, highlighting the incompatibility of certain identities (e.g. Muslim and Turk) with the Greek history and culture. She understands multicultural competence as mastering cultural knowledge about a variety of cultures. She suggests exclusion of culturally diverse students facing linguistic difficulties in separate tutorial classes until they reach the level of the regular classroom. She has attended diversity-related modules but feels unprepared to address multicultural classrooms as, during her teaching practice, she has been placed in perceived homogenous classrooms and has not implemented multicultural education.

Andrianna is a Greek female, brought up in a big city in Southern Greece. She supports inclusion of culturally diverse students in regular classrooms, facilitated by individualised learning interventions designed by the teacher. She has attended diversity-related modules but critiques them as very theoretical without any element of practice. She mentions the importance of multicultural education for all classrooms but she has not applied it during her teaching practice, even when a student with an ethnically diverse background was present. She mentions the lack of encouragement by the leading teacher as a possible reason that did not inspire her to use multicultural education in her teaching practice.

<u>Focus Group 6</u> (conducted in a big city in Southern Greece, in a Primary Education Departmental lecture room)

Participant Information:

Maria is a Greek female, brought up in a metropolitan Greek city. She is open to diversity integration and inclusion, mentioning having a lot of culturally diverse friends. She struggles with offering concrete strategies that she would use to promote culturally diverse students' integration and multiculturalism in the classroom beyond festivities. She also shows some misconceptions regarding the importance of mother-tongue learning. She has attended diversity-related modules that she found helpful in terms of equipping her with a sound theoretical knowledge base. She mentions multicultural education as important in all classrooms but, although she had a culturally diverse student in her teaching practice classroom, she did not implement multicultural education because the leading teacher was restrictive.

Renia is a Greek female, born and raised in Germany until she finished high school. She then moved to a big city in Central Greece. She supports diversity integration both in society and education and highlights the paramount role that family plays in that, drawing form her own background.[25]

Mairi is a Greek female, brought up in a big city in Southern Greece. She supports diversity integration both in society and school. She offers critical insights regarding structural inequalities that might inhibit culturally diverse students' learning and highlights the role of teacher in tackling those. She has attended diversity-related modules but has no experience of multicultural education implementation. For that, she blames the fact that she has been placed in perceived homogenous classrooms but also herself for not making this choice.

Tina is a Greek female, brought up in a metropolitan Greek city. She supports diversity integration both in society and education. She supports the need for multicultural classrooms and schools. She has attended diversity-related modules that she found very helpful theoretically but highlights the lack of multicultural education implementation.

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[25] Renia received a phone call during the focus group asking her to go back to work urgently so she left before the discussion finished. Thus, the details provided are fewer.

Evi is a Greek female, brought up in a metropolitan city in Greece. She supports diversity inclusion and advocates the importance of multicultural education for all students and classroom settings. She has attended diversity-related modules, through which she reported gaining strong theoretical knowledge. However, she highlights the absence of practical elements in relation to multicultural education. She mentions her most recent leading classroom teacher as a good role-model, who encouraged her to implement multicultural education, through facilitating a classroom discussion around the refugee population currently residing in Greece.

Marianna is a Greek female, supporting diversity integration in school but struggling to come up with concrete suggestions for facilitating that aside of festivities. She has attended diversity-related modules that she perceived as important in terms of theoretical knowledge related to multicultural education but highlights her lack in practical skills, in terms of multicultural classroom management and relevant learning material preparation. She mentions a small experience with cultural diversity in her teaching practice, having had just one ethnically diverse student.[26]

Kaiti is a Greek female, supporting diversity integration. She is in favour of mother-tongue retention for bilingual students and would support parents to use it for communication at home. She has attended diversity-related modules which she feels equipped her with knowledge but no practical strategies. She mentions one of her classroom leading teachers as a role model for a multiculturally competent educator, who designed different educational material and implemented individualised learning plans for three students in his classroom that faced language difficulties, without excluding them from the classroom setting. However, she criticises her most recent leading classroom teacher as indifferent to cultural diversity as, although he had an Albanian student struggling with Greek language, he ignored him completely instead of assisting him in learning.[26]

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[26] These participants joined the group around the middle of the discussion. Thus, the details provided are fewer.