ACCEPT PLURALISM

The interaction between racist discourse and the rise in racial violence: The far right attack against a multicultural Rainbow Festival

Nicos Trimikliniotis and Corina Demetriou
SYMFILIOSI

The interaction between racist discourse and the rise in racial violence: The case of a far right attack against a multicultural festival in 2010

N. TRIMIKLINIOTIS AND C. DEMETRIOU

Work Package 4 – National Case Studies of Challenges to Tolerance in Political Life

D4.1 Final Country Reports on Concepts and Practices of Tolerance Addressing Cultural Diversity in Political Life

Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe (ACCEPT PLURALISM)

ACCEPT PLURALISM is a Research Project, funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Program. The project investigates whether European societies have become more or less tolerant during the past 20 years. In particular, the project aims to clarify: (a) how is tolerance defined conceptually, (b) how it is codified in norms, institutional arrangements, public policies and social practices, (c) how tolerance can be measured (whose tolerance, who is tolerated, and what if degrees of tolerance vary with reference to different minority groups). The ACCEPT PLURALISM consortium conducts original empirical research on key issues in school life and in politics that thematise different understandings and practices of tolerance. Bringing together empirical and theoretical findings, ACCEPT PLURALISM generates a State of the Art Report on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Handbook on Ideas of Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Tolerance Indicators' Toolkit where qualitative and quantitative indicators may be used to score each country's performance on tolerating cultural diversity, and several academic publications (books, journal articles) on Tolerance, Pluralism and Cultural Diversity in Europe. The ACCEPT PLULARISM consortium is formed by 18 partner institutions covering 15 EU countries. The project is hosted by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and co-ordinated by Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou.

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Symfiliosi is a non-profit non-governmental and non-partisan organisation registered in the Republic of Cyprus in 2005 which carries out research as well as activist work. Its research interests include immigration, asylum, racism, discrimination, homophobia, sex-trafficking, nationality and citizenship and reconciliation. Its activist work is centred around anti-racism and anti-nationalism with a focus on reconciliation between Cyprus' two large communities, the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot community

Nicos Trimikliniotis is an interdisciplinary scholar working in the fields of sociology and law. He is Associate Professor of Law and Sociology and Director of the Centre of the Study of Migration, Inter-ethnic and Labour Relations at the University of Nicosia. He is, since 2008, senior research consultant at PRIO Cyprus Centre. He is the national expert for Cyprus of the European networks of experts on Free Movement of Workers (2008-) and Labour Law (2010-). He is the Cypriot national expert on Independent Network of Labour Migration and Integration Experts (LMIE-INET) for the International Organization for Migration (2009-).

Corina Demetriou is a freelance legal researcher specialising in discrimination (all grounds), immigration, asylum and sex trafficking. Since 2007 she is the national expert of the European Legal Network of Legal Experts in the non-discrimination field.

Contact details:
Dr Nicos Trimikliniotis
Centre for the Study of Migration
University of Nicosia
Makedonitissis 46, Nicosia, Cyprus
Fax: + 357 22 878846
E-mail: nicostrim@gmail.com

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Executive Summary

This report aims at exploring and defining the impact of racist discourse on the rise of the far right and on the consequential manifestation of racial violence, addressing at the same time the processes through which the upsurge of racial violence and far right politics impacted political discourse and policies. This interaction redefines the concept of tolerance and acceptance as it is operated in Cyprus.

The report examines the situation resulting from a single event which took place in November 2010 in Cyprus' third largest city, when an anti-racist festival was attacked by far right groups. In particular, the report investigates the discourses around tolerance/intolerance generated by the event, the way in which the event was addressed by the authorities and the political actors, the media representations of the event and its aftermath. The report argues that this event essentially tilted the balance in favour of a 'new order of things' that emerged in its aftermath, which legitimised racist discourse, the increasing activity of the far right and the impunity for the perpetrators of racial violence. Through examining this event and the situation which this has generated, the report aims at identifying the elements that compose the backdrop to the historical tensions between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities, particularly the legal impunity for the ethnic violence of the past, the use and abuse of the 'doctrine of necessity' that has essentially pushed Turkish Cypriots into the margins of society and of collective conscience and the lack of political will to combat the ideologies of hate, now spreading beyond the Turkish Cypriots and affecting migrants.

Through the studying of indexes, research studies and the policy/legal framework of the rigid immigration regime, the report highlights the low levels of civic and political participation of the groups most vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation. The report further attempts a presentation of the far right movements in Cyprus of the last few years in the context of the racist discourse they generate.

A contextualisation of the debate into European and national perceptions of integration reveals the weaknesses of the very notion of integration and the inherent xenophobic, Eurocentric and ethnocentric elements this contains, engendering old and breeding new forms of intolerance. In addition, Cyprus' protracted ethnic conflict has generated a system of 'states of exception' (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2011) within which the questions of migration, multiculturalism and identity need to be reviewed.

A historical contextualisation of tolerance/intolerance reveals 'concerns' about immigration flows into the country almost as soon as immigration into Cyprus begun, in the early 1990s. The overwhelming rejection of the UN peace plan for the resolution of the Cyprus problem in 2004 led to a rise in nationalistic sentiments and to an intolerant atmosphere which was quickly taken up and exploited by opportunistic populist politicians who aimed at ensuring the delegitimisation and rejection and of all future U.N. peace plans. The election of a left-wing government in 2008 meant a change in the official discourse but at the same time an intensification of negative depictions of migrants and Turkish Cypriots from opposition politicians and opposition media, seeking to undermine the new government's immigration policy and efforts to reach a settlement over the Cyprus problem. A rather conservative, technical and legalistic tradition in Cypriot politics leads to the depiction of anti-racists as trouble makers, at par with their racist 'counterparts', as mainstream politicians and journalists keep equal distance from both racists and anti-racists, blaming both equally for the violence that erupted at the Festival. This has led to a mainstreaming of racist speech that has changed the terms of the debate and tilted the balance in favour of the camp that encompasses sensationalist media, populist right wing politics and the far right.

Drawing on the conclusions of previous research, one may locate a number of transformations which the phenomena of racism and intolerance have undergone as a result of policy measures and the complacency of the authorities. These transformations involve: a relocation of the problem in less

policed or monitored arenas; a rise attributed to the lack of human rights education; the general complacency of the authorities and particularly the educationalists' preferred interpretation of the racist phenomenon as 'youth delinquency'; and a potential relocation of the problem to younger ages and to more violent and more organised groupings.

Whilst far right discourses were afforded their own space in the public sphere in the context of the democratic game, liberal tolerance paradoxically became the reproductive mechanism for ethno-racial intolerance. 'Free speech' eventually led to the re-legitimisation of far right ideologies, despite the fact that these had been overwhelmingly discredited in the 1970s. But further factors were added to this problem: The trivialisation of the problem of the rise of the far right; the increasing securitisation of migration, leading to the securitisation of identity politics; the increasing acceptance from academia of revisionism of far right ideologies; and the legal impunity for racial violence, have all contributed to the strengthening of the far right agenda. These five factors need to be addressed in the context of the adoption of informed policy measures, with due attention to the Cypriot state of exceptionalism, which normalises the protracted 'state of siege', in existence since the mid-1960s, and extends authoritarian statism in a manner generating further intolerance of the excluded and marginalised groups.

1. General Introduction

1.1 Political Challenge since 2000

1.1.1. Introduction

This paper examines the dialectic of tolerance/intolerance generated by one event, which was a turning-point in tilting the balance in the direction of legitimizing racial discourse and ideology. The anti-racist Rainbow Festival of November 2010, and the anti-immigrant riots around the event, recreated the political landscape as regards public depiction of what discourse, ideologies and practices can be tolerated in a democratic polity. The actual event itself and the public debates that followed are crucial in understanding the transformations taking place in society, the politics of racism derived from endogenous processes within Cypriot society as well the influence of EU and international factors in the era of economic crisis: the politicization of anti-immigration took a new twist in legitimizing ethno-racial and religious intolerance but also generated new processes of racial and anti-immigrant reactions endowing an anti-immigrant, anti-Turkish agenda as a public issue in Greek-Cypriot politics.

The event under study ('the Event') took place on 5 November 2010, when a far right group notorious for its attacks on migrants staged a public discussion in Larnaca, Cyprus' third largest city. The theme was "*illegal immigration*". The public discussion culminated with a march to protest against "*illegal migrants*" and "*settlers*" in Larnaca. The main speaker and leader of the march was a right-wing MP representing, at the time, one of the mainstream political parties, DEKO which is the party of the former president. Their protest was directed primarily against a group of Palestinian and other Muslim refugees and asylum seekers residing in Larnaca. The main slogans were: "No to the Islamisation of our homeland"; "Immediate deportation of illegal immigrants"; "Immediate stop of provocative benefits and privileges to the so called refugees".[1]

In anticipation to the anti-immigrant event, the organizers of the Rainbow Festival, an annual anti-racist multi-cultural event, chose a venue not far from where the far right anti-immigrant protest was to be held, having secured for this purpose the necessary permits from the authorities. After a series of anti-immigrant speeches, the far right protest march forcefully entered the anti-racist festival and attacked the participants, including several migrant and refugee women and children.[2]

This was by no means the only incident of racial violence in recent years. The post-2004 period[3] has seen the emergence of a number of far right groups, growing incidents of racial violence and a sharp rise in far right populist politics manifested in and exacerbated by the largest of the media outlets who have their own political agenda to promote.

1.1.2. Theoretical debate

This paper empirically investigates a particular theoretical frame. It explores the ways in which a single *Event,* namely the incidents around the Rainbow festival/anti-immigrant march in Larnaca 2010 as construed in the media and public sphere, had a major influence in shifting the public debate on the question of tolerance as a public issue in Cyprus and in Greek-Cypriot society. Of course the event did

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[1] See the relevant press release of one of the organisers of the far right march, KEA (Movement of Hellenic Resistance, in Greek: Κίνημα Ελληνικής Αντίστασης) at http://antistasi.org/?p=11383

[2] The event is described in more detail below.

[3] As it will be discussed later, 2004 is a landmark in the rise of the far right, as it marks the government-led overwhelming rejection of the UN peace plan for the resolution of the Cyprus problem, known as the Annan Plan.

not emerge out of the blue. Rather, it was part of a string of incidents that culminated in the 2010 landmark event, in the sense of Badiou's philosophical *Event*,[4] which can be seen as 'exceptional' in that it disturbed the dominant order of things and revealed what appeared to be inconsistent elements of a situation. Yet to make Badiou's paradigm operational for the purposes of an essentially sociological study of the dialectic of tolerance/intolerance in Cyprus, we need to reformulate and adapt it:

- The characteristics of the Event under study is quite different from Badiou's type of Event: This is not the *Event* of a 'social revolution' where the oppressed are revolting, but rather one which describes *a racist/anti-immigrant counter-revolution*: the group of people, or a collective subject who remain 'faithful to the truth of the Event', through dedication and discipline for it to continue, are the cadres of the far right and the professionals acting as 'organic intellectuals' of the media moguls. It is still depicted as a 'victory' of the anti-immigration lobby by those who try to derive political capital form the event.

- The sort of 'new order' that emerged after the *Event* is contested, as it is another 'meta-conflict', i.e. a public ideological contestation about the 'proper explanation' of the particular conflict situation between different schools of thought and political/ideological outlook as well as the media outlets available to them (Trimikliniotis, Demetriou and Papamichael, 2012).[5] However, as a matter of empirical reading, the anti-immigrant and racist discourse in the public media appears to be fully 'legitimized' and 'normalized': far right and Neo-Nazi organisers and ideologues are now 'rehabilitated' and are welcome in media panels, both in public and privately owned channels to sit side by side with other political groups and parties. Of course there had been an abundance of racist and anti-immigrant discourse prior to that *Event* reflecting such opinions in society, however no public figure was willing to be publically associated to Nazism and Fascism, which are essentially a term of abuse, or with the Greek-Cypriot far right which had been associated with the Greek junta and humiliated since the failure of the 1974 far Right coup. This has fundamentally changed: there are those who do not find it objectionable to associate themselves with the Nazism and Fascism of the Greek-Cypriot coupists. They are now part of the democratic political game.

- The intense *polarization* or *dissensus* as a fundamental disagreement over migration has become even more intense following the *Event*: it has radicalized some anti-racists, whilst there is a new effort to try to learn from past failures. As time goes by and the past fades into oblivion by new Events, at least at national level, the Event becomes more *localised*; nevertheless, the *dissensus* over migration and the relations with the Turkish-Cypriots are constantly replayed in the ever-changing political landscape of Cyprus.

This is based on the following five propositions:

- First, there is *under-valuing and trivialization of the breadth of the problem of racial violence* and a persistent failure to properly connect this process to the rise of new breads of neo-Nazism and far right ideologies. The life-style and light approaches to history in essence sensationalise the issue and, in the longer-term, act as an ideological gloss that belittles denial of racial violence of the past.

- Second, the construction of 'free speech' and 'pluralism' as a liberal democratic right, has resulted in the re-legitimization of the formerly legally and morally repugnant far Right ideologies.

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[4] This paper does not wish to enter the terrain of the ontological philosophical debates of Badiou's magnum opus *Being and Event*. It merely takes as a working hypothesis the simple expalanation provided in his ethic on evil (Badiou 2000), to operationalise this sociologically into a study of a truly significant event.

[5] The notion of 'meta-conflict' refers to the terms of the highly contested debate over the nature and meaning 'conflict' (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995).

- Third, the new far right agenda is essentially racial and anti-immigrant, articulated within the national and global security agenda.
- Fourth, the academic/research community, which is increasingly bureaucratized, has offered various technocratic insights lending legitimacy to various aspects of social, economic and political life, but failed to identify and delegitimize the new racial agendas.
- Fifth, the combination of legal impunity for the ethnic violence of the past, the 'doctrine of necessity'(Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2011) and the lack of political will by the prosecution authorities to combat the ideologies and the organisations breeding racial intolerance, hatred and violence has intensified the phenomenon.

The five propositions above produce a *perverse liberalism* that draws on a combination of factors which Europeanize the local political debates and localize European debates in the Cypriot political context. In terms of the alternative perspective that opens up the spaces to diversity, tolerance and understanding, this is based on redressing and reversing the five propositions that generate such spaces.

1.2 Contextualisation in society

Cypriot society has always been multicultural; co-existence with the Turkish Cypriot community and with the three constitutionally recognised minorities (Maronites, Armenians, and Latins) dates back to several centuries. This aspect of the history of the country as historically a multicultural society is often ignored, as the history of the conflict, the war and the de facto partition since 1974 has dominated the debates and literature about Cyprus (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2011; Trimikliniotis and Bozkurt, 2012).

In the 1990s, the pressing need for working hands to meet labour shortages led Cyprus to open its doors to migrant workers, who now form 20% of its working population. The three national minorities enjoy a high degree of social integration and amicable relations with the majority population and the administration.[6] However, problems persist with the other three communities of Cyprus: the Turkish-Cypriots (who are, constitutionally, not a minority but a community of equal standing with the Greek Cypriot community); the Roma who are seen as part of the Turkish Cypriot community and are not afforded separate status; and the various migrant communities. The vulnerable position of these groups, who are not recognised by the state as national minorities, is not acknowledged or addressed by any official instrument. However, the level of racism and discrimination they are confronted with in almost all fields in varying degrees is well documented by several studies and reports[7] and repeatedly highlighted by, inter alia, successive ECRI reports,[8] Opinions of the Advisory Committee on national Minorities[9] and Reports of the Committee of Experts on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Cyprus.[10] None of these communities has been singled out by the governmental authorities as a group at risk of poverty or as a vulnerable group.[11]

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[6] Although the authors recognise that the three national minorities do face problems, particularly in the field of employment, due to constraints of space and time, this report will focus on the other groups at risk, namely the Turkish Cypriots and the migrants.

[7] See for instance Demetriou (2011).

[8] See for instance ECRI (2011) , which expresses concern over the educational problems faced by the Roma and the Turkish Cypriots and the negative attitudes towards migrants.

[9] See for instance Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of national Minorities (2010).

[10] See for instance Council of Europe:Committee of Ministers, 2009. (date last accessed 30.09.2009).

[11] The Cyprus National Reform Program (CNRP) which sets out the parameters of the economic, social and employment situation in Cyprus and the policies adopted to meet the EU 2020 goals is mainly geared towards addressing inequalities due to gender, age and disability. Even the priorities of the Cypriot Presidency of the EU (July-December 2012) do not address issues of ethnic, national and racial diversity of society or of the workforce.
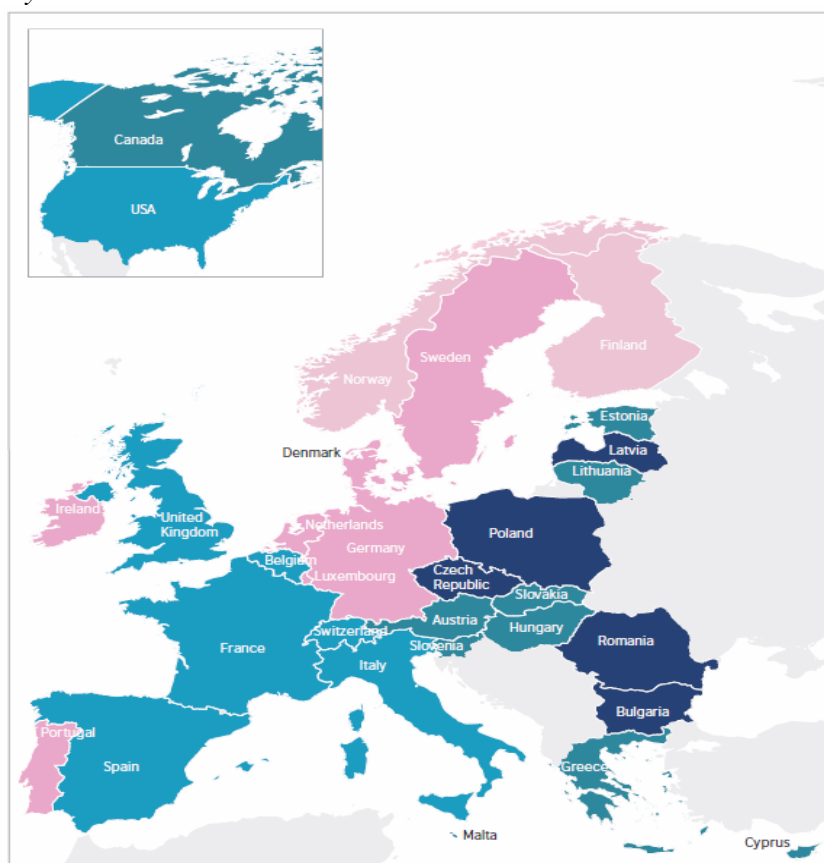
1.3 Political activity of migrants and Turkish-Cypriots

All studies converge on the assumption that migrants in Cyprus have zero political activity. The *Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)*[12], which locates Cyprus in a generally *unfavourable* integration position, provides a point of departure and comparison across the EU: Cyprus is only one out of five EU member states where the majority of non-nationals are from other EU countries; only 5.7% of the total population originates from outside the EU. Asylum seekers and international students make up a large part of the immigration flows. Legislative developments have been restricted to the delayed transposition of the EC Directives on family reunion and long-term residence, as well as some minor amendments to the laws transposing the two anti-discrimination Directives, in order to bring the transposing legislation in line with the equality *acquis*. The study analyzes the areas in which Cyprus fares well in comparison to other EU countries and where it is "weak":

- Anti-discrimination is the strongest of the six areas of integration policy measured by MIPEX, although it is still a full 40 percentage points away from best practice.
- Political participation scores unfavourably, with several critically weak policy dimensions.
- Even with the transposition of the EC Directives on family reunion and long-term residence, Cyprus has the worst score on family reunion out of the 28 MIPEX countries, the second worst on long-term residence, and the fourth worst on labour market access.

Migrant Integration Policy Index by rank

Rank	Country	MIPEX% III		II
1	Norway	94	■	(94)
2	Finland	87	■	(87)
3	Ireland	79	■	(79)
	Netherlands	79	■	(79)
5	Luxembourg	78	▲	(76)
6	Sweden	75	■	(75)
7	Portugal	70	▲	(69)
8	Germany	64	■	(64)
9	Denmark	62	▼	(66)
10	Belgium	59	▼	(61)
	Switzerland	59	▲	(58)
12	Spain	56	■	(56)
13	United Kingdom	53	■	(53)
14	Italy	50	■	(50)
15	USA	45	■	
16	France	44	■	(44)
	EU Average	44	■	
17	Greece	40	▲	(25)
18	Canada	38	■	(38)
19	Austria	33	■	(33)
	Hungary	33	■	(33)
21	Estonia	28	■	(28)
	Slovenia	28	■	(28)
23	Cyprus	25	■	(25)
	Lithuania	25	■	(25)
	Malta	25	■	(25)
26	Slovakia	21	■	(21)
27	Latvia	18	■	(18)
28	Bulgaria	17	■	
29	Czech Republic	13	■	(13)
	Poland	13	■	(13)
31	Romania	8	■	

Source: MIPEX

There are many reasons for the non-integration, non-participation and exclusion of migrants, most of which are related to the stringent conditions of work and residence and the unfavourable immigration

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[12] The MIPEX data on Cyprus are available at http://www.mipex.eu/cyprus

regime. Until a few years back, the standard contract of employment of migrant workers supplied by the Ministry of Labour prohibited migrants' political participation; this clause was removed following the intervention of the Equality Body, in the frame of investigating a complaint about it. Their stay in Cyprus is short-tem: save in exceptional circumstances, the maximum term of stay is four years. During this period, they are 'attached' to a specific employer and to a particular job. If the employer is in breach of his/her contractual obligations, migrant employees *may* be allowed to change employer (but not profession) during their four-year stay; however the general rule is that if their employment contract expires or is terminated, then their visa is automatically revoked and they must leave the country immediately. If they stay after the expiration or termination of their contract, they become 'illegal' and subject to deportation. Migrants have also been known to have been deported arbitrarily, without due process and under conditions that did not warrant their deportation; several of such instances are recorded in successive Ombudsman annual reports. Even when they are in full compliance with their terms of stay and work, they may still be subjected to the police's regular "stop and check" practices.[13] Under this stringent regime, it is hardly surprising that they will choose not to draw negative attention upon themselves by engaging in politics.

The fact that migrants have no right to vote at any level[14] contributes to their being ignored by politicians across the board. On 30.11.2009 the equality body issued a report intending to intervene with the Cypriot government in order to encourage the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level, which had been signed since 1996. The report states that there are municipalities where the majority of the residents are migrants and that their exclusion from decision making bodies that affect their everyday lives is not conducive to their developing a sense of belonging to the community (Anti-discrimination Authority, 2009b). At the time of writing, the said Convention had still not been ratified, reportedly owing to a refusal of the majority in the Parliament.

The few cultural/ self-help / religious organizations of migrants do not really fill the gap created by the restrictions in their political and civic participation from the stringent immigration regime, societal intolerance, racism and discrimination faced across the board and their lack of voting rights (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2005).

In the case of the Turkish-Cypriots, the constitutional crisis of 1963 and the inter-communal violence that ensued, culminating in the war of 1974 has essentially stripped them of their communal rights under the Constitution. The wide interpretation which the 'doctrine of necessity' has been subjected to by the administration and the judicial system has further stripped them of several other rights, such as the right to their properties located in the area controlled by the Republic, [15]the right to access the labour market on the basis of academic qualifications obtained in the unrecognised TRNC,[16] and

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[13] One of such police operations which became the subject of considerable public debate was a raid carried out by the police at dawn on 25.09.2009 allegedly in order to hunt down irregular migrant workers. The operation, which was code-named by the police as operation "sweep", involved the setting up of roadblocks in the city centre, invading the houses of migrants, mass transfer to police stations, use of handcuffs and coverage of all these images in Hollywood style by the media which had been invited to the spot in advance by the police. In total, 257 police members were involved in the operation, leading to 150 migrants being forcibly taken to police stations for identification. The Interior Minister and the Mayor of Nicosia, both of the left wing party AKEL, criticised the operation, which had been carried out by the police without informing them. In response, the Chief of Police told the press that he needed no-one's permission in order to 'enforce the law' and warned that similar operations will continue to be carried out. The minutes of the 03.09.2009 deliberations at the House of Representatives (i.e. before the raids) quote the right-wing Justice Minister saying that the police was instructed to instantly remove "undesirables" (referring to irregular migrants) even when they have no papers and "deport them to Iran". At the same deliberations, the Chief of Police asked the Parliamentarians to empower the police to summarily deport all irregular migrants as soon as apprehended, so that they do not stay in Cyprus long enough to acquire rights.

[14] The Law on the Exercise of the Right to Vote and be Elected at Municipal and Local Elections by Nationals of Other Member States Residing in the Republic N. 98(I)2004 provides for the right of EU nationals with their ordinary residence in Cyprus to vote and stand as candidates at municipal and local elections.

[15] For a legal analysis of the property issue in Cyprus, see Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2012.

[16] The initials stand for 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus'.

several others. Their right to vote which was denied to all Turkish Cypriots as from 1964, was restored for the first time in 2006, following a decision of the ECHR against Cyprus.[17] Pursuant to the ECHR decision, a law came into force[18] granting the right to Turkish-Cypriots residing in the government-controlled areas to vote and to stand for election. The law has its setbacks and has been criticized by political circles including the Turkish Cypriot applicant himself, as it essentially grants voting rights only to those Turkish Cypriots who choose to take up residence in the area controlled by the Republic; this category of Turkish Cypriots are very few in number and, living in a rather hostile environment, invariably choose to keep a low profile. Thus, apart from exercising their voting rights, they have no other civic or political participation.

In addition to problems of discrimination stemming from the application of the 'doctrine of necessity', at the societal level Turkish Cypriots are faced with hostility and intolerance, perceived as inextricably linked to Turkey. Despite the Turkish Cypriots increasingly rebelling against the idea of the 'Turkish motherland', their image as stooges of Turkey is a card that populist politicians produce at convenience. A recently emerging discursive frame in the media and in political debates is in fact linking the two 'archenemies', the migrants and Turkish Cypriots, as migrant and refugee flows into Cyprus are depicted as orchestrated by Turkey in an effort to 'colonize' the south of Cyprus and change its demographic character, as it did with the Turkish-controlled north of the country.
The Roma, even though Cypriot citizens, live in extreme poverty with a low degree of integration and zero civic participation; however as measures are adopted in the field of education of the Roma children, it is hoped that this situation will improve with the new generation of Roma.

1.4. Political debates regarding migrants and Turkish Cypriots

There is an increasingly loud and frequent public discourse, which utilises signifiers to direct Greek-Cypriots against migrants and Turkish Cypriots, inciting racial and religious hatred via the substitutes of 'race' such as other essential or inherent or hereditary characteristics which derive, not from blood or DNA, but from culture, language, migration and religion, in what scholars refer to as neo-racism (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991). These are regularly articulated in the mainstream press and media. Traditionally, Cyprus had no typical far right / xenophobic populist or Neo-Nazi party, focusing for instance on anti-immigration populism or anti-Semitic politics.[19] However, this has gradually changed. In the 2009 elections for members of the European Parliament, a neo-Nazi type of party called 'Ethniko Laiko Metopo' (ELAM)[20] contested the elections and received 663 votes (0.22%); it received no media coverage or air time. During the Parliamentary election the main discussion lines of ELAM produced the usual racist slogans contained in the Greek neo-Nazi and extreme Right papers and magazines,[21] claiming that it is the only party that speaks of "liberation of our enslaved lands, the ending of the privileges of the 'greedy' Turkish-Cypriots and for a Europe of Nations and traditions

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[17]The case was Ibrahim Aziz v. the Republic of Cyprus, ECHR/ No. 308 (22.06.2004) reported at: http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2004/June/ChamberJudgmentAzizvCyprus220604.htm. Aziz, a Turkish Cypriot residing in the south had applied to ECHR against the government's decision not to allow him to register on the electoral roll in order to vote in the forthcoming elections. The government's decision was upheld at first instance as well as at the Supreme Court of Cyprus on the ground that under the Cyprus Constitution Turkish-Cypriots could not be registered in the Greek-Cypriot electoral roll and since 1963 when the participation of the Turkish-Cypriot members of parliament was suspended, no Turkish electoral lists existed. The ECHR ruled in favour of the complainant, citing Article 3, Protocol 1 and Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, as the difference in treatment complained of resulted from the fact that the complainant was a Turkish-Cypriot and such difference could not be justified on reasonable and objective grounds.

[18] Law on the Exercise of the Right to Elect and Be elected by the Members of the Turkish Community who have their Normal Residence in the Government-Controlled Area (21.01.2006).

[19] Any hidden or indirect references in the discourse of the small anti-Turkish and far Right groups operating within mainstream political parties.

[20] elamcy.com

[21] It is a mixture of the neo-Nazi magazines and newspapers *ΣΤΟΧΟΣ, Χρυσή Αυγή, Απολλώνιο Φως* and the extreme Right magazines such as *Ρεσάλτο* and nationalist/ anti-Turkish magazines such as *ΕΛΛΟΠΙΑ* etc.

which belongs to the real Europeans and not to the 'third-worldly' [backward] illegal immigrants".[22] During the 2009 European Parliament elections, EVROKO, [23] a party on the Right which won 4,12% of the votes and with three MPs sitting in the national Parliament, tried to capitalise on xenophobic anti-immigration by arguing that the Greek-Cypriots "are becoming a minority in their own country" and tried to connect the issue of settlers from Turkey to the alleged 'out of control' employment of 'illegal aliens' who are blamed for taking the jobs of Cypriots and for the rise in crime (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2009c). Racist discourse however is not restricted to the two far right parties, as individual politicians from mainstream centre-right parties can and do articulate racist speech. In 2012, the Equality Body issued a decision condemning the slogans of the electoral campaign of a candidate for the municipal elections, following complaints filed against him (Anti-discrimination Authority, 2012). The candidate in question was supported by DESY, the largest party in Cyprus at the moment, very likely to win the next presidential elections in February 2013. The candidate did not issue a public apology, neither was he publicly reprimanded by his party for his anti-immigrant statements.

2. Racist discourse and the rise of racial violence: A case study on the far right attack against a multicultural Festival

2.1 Relevance of case study

The political challenge for Cyprus is intimately connected to the ways in which the national context has been historically connected and is increasingly integrated within the European context and the debates in the EU and beyond. Besides, despite UN efforts refer to the importance of 'dialogue of cultures' (Faleiro) the so-called 'clash of civilizations' (Huntington, 1996) has become more ingrained in the 'global political agenda'. Moreover, the processes of securitisation of national identity, whereby ethnic diasporas are construed as a threat to national identity (Huntington, 2004)[24] have fed into the debates in most European countries. There has undoubtedly been *Europeanization* (i.e. connected to the EU integration project) and *localisation* within particular national contexts of these broader debates. The debates took a concrete form in the context of the question of integration of migrants in the EU via the development of policies to integrate migrants, national action plans for integration and other Integration 'instruments' and toolkits'.[25] The logic of the 'clash of civilisations' is feeding into the perception and representation of those migrant and ethnic groups who are considered to belong to the 'other' side, the enemy camp, using ethnic, religious and cultural markers to differentiate and exclude them. Even those measures which are depicted as benign and positively aim at *integrating* migrants, Diaspora and other ethnic communities by "making room" in the receiving country for migrants to fit in, to accommodate and adapt (Groenendijk (2004: 113), alternatives senses of integration generate very different results in society. In fact, the current integration policy framework has "diverse roles" in the EU context with various actors pushing for different agendas and the tension between the security/identity agenda pursued versus the rights-based approach (Mitsilegas, 2007). The most serious aspect as regard the subject of tolerance and acceptance as related to this paper are the restrictive and exclusionary elements contained in the very notions of 'integration' (Groenendijk, 2012; Kostakopoulou, 2010a; 2010b). The integration packages as understood and implemented today often contain exclusionary, xenophobic, Eurocentric and ethnocentric elements, which are pandering to and reflecting the current anti-immigrant public opinion driven by forces who want to exploit the latest economic crisis.

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[22] Our translation from the section of the website that refers to the ideology of the party, http://ethnikolaikometwpo.blogspot.com/2009/06/2009.html (22.07.2009).

[23] The initials stand for Ευρωπαϊκό Κόμμα (European Party).

[24] Huntington (2004) castigated the West's diasporic and increasingly multicultural cities. In this context, national identity is being threatened by the 'global Islamic conspiracy' and the Latino communities in the USA.

[25] For critical reviews see Pascouau (2012), Pascouau and Strik (2012); Trimikliniotis 2012; Kostakopoulou 2010a; 2010b.

In this sense the current European *dissensus*, as Rancière (2010) would have it, or what has been depicted as *a fundamental disagreement* is the connection between national identity and migration and the incorporation of the ethnic/national 'Other' within the boundaries of the *Nation*. What is branded in a number of EU countries as a 'crisis of multiculturalism' which is in reality a crisis of citizenship in Europe. The above issues have filtered through Greek-Cypriot discourses. Similar intolerant discourse have also been prominent in Greek-Cypriot debates over migration and migrant integration in Cyprus is engendering old and breeding new forms of racial, ethnic, religious intolerance and hatred: those on the anti-immigrant Right, particularly small but virulent neo-Nazis and far right groups express an intense feeling of being threatened by the immigration and the need to re-affirm the 'national heritage' of the country, as they see it, via drastic anti-immigrant action. In the context of what is seen as a 'national emergency' of a siege mentality 'the enemy is already in the city', this means coercion and violence. Any 'drastic' acts are depicted as either 'self-defence' or 'legitimate reaction/retaliation' for the state's alleged failure to take resolute action to 'secure' the nation's survival. There is a new polarization in the public discourse over questions relating to migrants (integration, irregular migration, border control and to some degree racism, discrimination and xenophobia), as there is a radicalisation by new groups consisting of persons who live a multicultural life and claim the right to the city as a matter of fact: they defend their way of living and a public sphere which is very much their everydayness.

In Cyprus, the logic of intolerance must be located within the context of a system of a multiple 'Cypriot states of exception', generated by the country's peculiar history and long-drawn conflict that has left the country de facto divided (Constantinou 2008; Trimikliniotis 2009; 2010). Over the last five years, we can definitely record a new vigour and polarization around the question of migration, multiculturalism and identity in Cyprus and increasingly, the research examines the gendered dimensions are dealt with.[26] Yet what is alarming is the powerful impetus in various 'popularised' and 'quasi-academic' versions question of securitization, with various former army generals[27] and former chiefs of the Police the various forms 'economic necessity' type of arguments are mushrooming lately – many imported from Greece and other EU countries and others 'home-grown'. The question of migration and integration crisis is often coloured as a "crisis of multiculturalism" which leads us to Stuart Hall's "multicultural question" (i.e. different groups living together in assimilation or degradation) as "the underlying question of globalisation".[28]

3. Methodology

The report draws on desk top studies in the field of migration, multiculturalism and interculturalism, on Cypriot Equality Body reports on racial violence and on policy and documentation papers drafted for or by the FRA and other organisations and institutions at the EU level. No interviews were carried out for the purpose of this report; however interviews conducted by the authors in the framework of other projects have been utilized for the purpose of this study as well.[29]

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[26] See the special issue of *The Cyprus Review* devoted to Migration, Racism and Multiculturalism in Cyprus, Volume 20: 2 Fall 2008.

[27] For instance the former general Klokaris has issued a book on defence matters and has lent his name to the one of the 'salvation fronts'. Also the book of the former general and minister of the Greek party PASOK, Yannis Koutsoyannis *Nomimos amina* (*Νόμιμος Άμυνα*, Ι. ΣΙΔΕΡΗ, Athens 2007) is quoted by the man in charge of the migration policy of the Right-wing EVROKO party in Cyprus. See what another far right general has to say about that book http://www.metanastis.com/PDF/NOMIMOS_AMYNA.pdf

[28] Quoted by Yuval-Davis et. al. (2006), p.6.

[29] The projects this report draws on are: Mig@Net Transational Digital Networks; MIPEX; XENOPHOB and RAXEN.

4. Analysis of the political challenge: The racist discourse turning into racial violence

4.1. Historical and spatial contextualisation

Over the last two decades, prior to 2008, various Government officials have raised their 'concern' about immigrants in Cyprus, a matter often connected to religion and cultural identity.[30] From the early to mid 1990s many Government ministers participated actively in the xenophobic debate. In 1995, the Minister of Education at the time had stated:

> We are no chauvinists; we are simply a small country with a permanent almost presence of a tourist population double in size to the Cyprus population and have to be careful so that we do not create another minority in free Cyprus, totally alien to our religious and cultural traditions.[31]

There was a change in the official discourse in 2008 when a new left wing government came into power; since then Government Ministers opposed to such public discourses are regularly accused by opposition politicians as being 'too soft on migrants', thus undermining the Hellenic and Greek Orthodox essence of identity and cohesion. The Greek-Cypriot Archbishop himself criticized the Government over migration and said that he "agrees with most of the views" of the neo-Nazi group ELAM[32] and described the group as "educated young persons, who are concerned about the country and their opinions are crystal clear".[33]

A press report in August 2011 about a racist violent incident against an unsuspecting Indian man by unknown young men riding a van without number plates and holding metallic bats, prompted a self initiated investigation by the Anti-discrimination Authority of the Equality Body into the handling of such incidents by the police because, as stated in the report, the dimensions of the problem of racist violence are not reflected either in the recording system of the police or in the prosecutions against perpetrators (Anti-discrimination Authority, 2011). The incident took place on 26.08.2011. The police investigation showed that between 25-28.08.2011 a number of other attacks took place in the same area most probably by the same perpetrators. According to the police report, although some of these attacks were against Cypriots, the circumstances were such that the assailants probably mistook the Cypriots for foreigners and so attacked them.

The findings of the Cypriot Equality Body investigation were published in a report dated 02.11.2011 which stresses the significance of recording racial incidents, with references to the ECRI Recommendations,[34] to the 2009 Annual report "Hate crimes in the OSCE Region – Incidents and Responses" and to the ECHR decision in the case of Nachova et al v Bulgaria (06.07.2005) where the Court underlined the duty of the state to investigate the possible connection between racial perceptions and violent acts. The report highlighted the weaknesses in the reporting system in Cyprus, which recorded only 3 hate crimes in 2007 and none for 2008 and 2009, whilst no charges were pressed against anybody in respect of any racial incidents. It further expressed concern over the fact that the

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[30] They have been accused by NGOs and International bodies for being 'anti-immigrant' and 'racist'.

[31] Kleri Angelidou, a former school teacher herself, at the time then Minister of Education. See introduction to a booklet of a conference entitled *Cyprus and Foreigners/Aliens* (KYKEM, 1995).

[32] He said in an interview with *Kathimerini* 26. 12.2010 "αν θέλετε, πλείστες απόψεις του Ε.ΛΑ.Μ. με εκφράζουν. Κι αν είναι εναντίον των λαθρομεταναστών, τολμώ να σας πω ότι και εγώ είμαι εναντίον των λαθρομεταναστών. Δεν μπορούμε να γίνει εδώ μια πανσπερμία", see http://steki-dromou.blogspot.com/search/label/%CE%B5%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%B1

[33] "Όσες φορές ήρθα σε επαφή με αυτά τα παιδιά, έχω αντιληφθεί ότι είναι μορφωμένα παιδιά, ενδιαφέρονται για τον τόπο και οι απόψεις τους είναι κρυστάλλινες". On 30.12.2010 he retracted following mounting criticism, 'Αρχιεπίσκοπος: «Δεν είμαι σοβινιστής και δεν ταυτίζομαι με το ΕΛΑΜ», 'http://www.sigmalive.com/news/local/340952 (last accessed: 11.06.2012).

[34] ECRI General Policy Recommendation No 11 on combating racism and racial discrimination in policing 2007.

particular incident reported in the press suggests for the first time that there are organized groups attacking immigrants, pointing out that one cannot exclude the possibility of wider anti-immigrant violent activity which goes unreported due to the victims' lack of trust in the authorities or because of the victims being undocumented migrants. The Equality Body added that the economic crisis is likely to intensify these phenomena, particularly as public discourse attributing the economic crisis to migrants reinforces xenophobic perceptions. It noted that the current landscape, as it has evolved, is particularly worrying, as the underestimation of the problem of racist violence, the erroneous assessment of the risk and the ineffective handling may lead to worse consequences.

The report lists a number of recommendations so as for the government to adequately record racist crime and adopt policies to prevent the commission of new offences, offering protection and security to all persons within its jurisdiction. The recommendations include: the intensification of activities for the investigation of racist attacks perhaps through delegating the task of investigation to persons with experience and knowledge; the investigation of racist incidents through utilization of the organizations of the migrants or of the NGOs working in this field; the publicisation of racist incidents and public awareness raising aiming at attracting informants; the public encouragement of victims to report the crimes; the recording of all incidents in order to adequately comprehend the nature and extent of racist violence so as to better inform policy initiatives; a comprehensive plan of action to improve and upgrade the system of recording and investigating racist violence. The authorities are called upon to use the rich legislative framework on combating racist violence, through the extensive powers they have to prosecute and punish perpetrators, because if inaction, tolerance and silence prevail, the confusion and impunity will result in the reproduction of the phenomenon.

The fact that the Equality Body chose to focus on the handling of racist crime in the only single self-initiated investigation in the year can only be seen as a positive initiative. However, one cannot overlook significant omissions and weaknesses which are characteristic of the manner in which Cypriot institutions address the problem of racial violence. The report fails to locate any connection between racist crime and the rise of the far right in Cyprus or to identify the policy failures in this field as institutional discrimination. The recommendations are far too vague to be of any real value to policy makers. Ironically, the recommendation towards the government to consult NGOs was not even taken up by the Equality Body itself, which chose to focus on a press article rather than on the press releases of NGOs which for years have been calling attention to organized racist violence against migrants.

4.2. Antecedents

The attack against the Rainbow Festival was by no mean the first or the only one of its kind in Cyprus in recent years. If one is to chart the trends as regards the rise of the far right and the upsurge of racist violence in the 2000s, the event which is key is the referendum of 24.04.2004 which massively (by a majority of 76%) rejected the United Nation's peace plan for the resolution of the Cyprus problem (known as 'the Annan Plan'). The unambiguous backing to the 'No vote' offered by the then president of Cyprus Tassos Papadopoulos and the demonization of the U.N. Plan and of its supporters created an irredentist and intolerant atmosphere, which was necessary for the plan to be so overwhelmingly rejected. This intolerant atmosphere led to a rise in nationalistic discourses, some genuinely deriving from personal nationalistic sentiments and others opportunistically pursued to ensure the delegitimisation and rejection and of all future U.N. proposals for the resolution of the Cyprus problem. In turn, these discourses soon bred racism and xenophobia that quickly got out of control, winning thousands of supporters amongst the Greek Cypriot public opinion and thus generating the need for 'patron'-politicians to embody and promote these views. This role was willingly taken up by individual politicians in various right wing political parties, who regularly paraded through the nationalist media as champions of the poor and the patriots, in order to expose the 'traitors' and denounce the welfare system that grants benefits to asylum seekers and Turkish Cypriots. Some of these politicians repeatedly (and misleadingly) leaked to the press copies of cheques issued from the

Welfare Services in favour of foreigners, in an effort to 'expose' the 'scandal' of foreigners and Turkish Cypriots receiving more benefits than the 'poor' Greek Cypriots. The first of such press 'leakages' took place only weeks before the attack against the Rainbow Festival and was one of the key points raised during the speeches delivered at the far right gathering that preceded the attack against the Festival.

Before the event in Larnaca, the first major incident of racial violence was the organised and unprovoked attack against Turkish Cypriot students at the prestigious semi-public English School of Nicosia by hooded youth holding bats in November 2006.[35] This was the first organised attack against Turkish Cypriots since the de facto ceasefire brought about by the end of the 1974 war. At the time of the English School attack, the general perception was that this was an isolated incident by a group of brainless youth, condemned by politicians and public persons across the board. It soon emerged however that this attack was only the first in a series of events that would be perpetrated by a newly emerging far right movement, which had laid firm foundations amongst the youth and particularly amongst the student population. In the years that followed, one would see many more racist attacks both within and outside the schools, perpetrated by organised groups of far right youths, targeting Turkish Cypriots and migrants. The election of a left wing pro-reconciliation president in the leadership of the Republic of Cyprus in 2008 created fears amongst the far right elements of the political elite that another plan for the settlement of the Cyprus problem, similar to the Annan plan presented in 2004, would soon be tabled. In order to discredit such a plan and ensure its rejection, a number of political forces amongst the opposition begun to undermine government policies as regards Turkish Cypriots and migrants, using racist populism in order to label these policies as "too soft". The economic crisis raised the unemployment rate amongst the youth to unprecedented levels and produced discontent and frustrations amongst the youth. The populist discourse of the right wing politicians fell on fertile ground and had its impact on the far right groups which felt justified and sufficiently backed to take to the streets, to the sports pitch and to the schools, recruiting members from amongst the student population.[36]

Since 2004, far right attacks against migrants and Turkish Cypriots are on the rise. Many of such attacks go unreported, whilst others receive briefly some media coverage and even become the subject of public debate for a while. The attack against the Rainbow festival is, however, of particular significance in terms of the scale of violence, which was unprecedented in recent years,[37] and the reaction of the authorities, the politicians and other stakeholders, none of whom showed any political will to support anti-racism or address the rising xenophobic tendencies in society. Furthermore, this attack and the impunity for the perpetrators that followed marked the 'scoring' of a significant victory for the far right, which intensified its activities after that. On 12 November 2010, just over a week after the attack against the Rainbow Festival, a group of youth stood outside the right wing football club APOEL and in broad daylight attacked all passers-by who looked 'foreign'. No arrests were made. A few weeks later, on 21 December 2010, a group of about 500 APOEL fans attacked the members of a Turkish team that was hosted in Nicosia for a game. The official reaction to the incident focused on how "mindless" persons exposed Cyprus and gave 'ammunition' to Turkey. This position is in line with a more generalized approach of the Cypriot political world of attributing racist incidents to juvenile delinquency, hooliganism and generally to anything other than racism. This approach has been repeatedly criticized by the Equality Body which had from 2008 sounded the alarm on racist violence and the poor reaction of the authorities (Trimikliniotis Demetriou and Papamichael, 2012).

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[35] This incident was attributed to EFEN, a student far right group connected to KEA, which organised the anti-immigrant march in Larnaca that attacked the Rainbow festival.

[36] Three particular incidents of racist violence at schools stand out for their aftermath and repercussion in society: the attack against Turkish Cypriot students at the English school mentioned above; the attack against a black Cypriot student in December 2008; and the attack against Iraqi and Palestinian asylum seeking students at the Vergina High School in Larnaca in February 2011 (Trimikliniotis Demetriou and Papamichael, 2012).

[37] This was the first time that a Turkish Cypriot was stabbed by a Greek Cypriot since the hostilities during the 1974 war.

The approach of the authorities, the police in particular, and of politicians was more technical and legalistic rather than substantive and politically informed, reflecting a decades' old tradition in Cypriot political life which is based on the strategies adopted as regards the Cyprus problem. In the 1960s and 1970s, this tendency had manifested itself in various ways: populist politics, ignoring political and geopolitical realities in an oddly conceived endeavour not to draw attention to them; refusing to anticipate and guard oneself against the rise of far right politics and its repercussions; impunity to the perpetrators of ethnic violence in exchange for 'national unity'; and the coining of the 'doctrine of necessity' which was initially intended to enable the continuity of the administration of the state after the withdrawal of the Turkish Cypriots (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2011). In the 2000s and particularly in the post-referendum era (2004-) this tradition led to the depiction of anti-racists as trouble makers, of equal footing as the racists, and to zero policy responses towards racism and xenophobia. Both trends are founded upon a well established attitude of hiding the problem under the carpet so that it is not visible to the international community, whose support is vital towards the resolution of the Cyprus problem in a manner that matches the Greek Cypriots' hopes and aspirations.

The absence of any policy response to combat the rise of the far right can also be attributed to lack of resources and technical know-how but also to the prioritization followed by the police in particular, which classifies the rise of the far right as a lesser problem compared to others, such as paedophilia.[38] The event, although widely debated in the media for months afterwards, was not investigated by the Equality Body[39] or indeed by any other state or non-state institution. The media itself, as well as politicians parading through the media, largely blamed the violence on the anti-racist festival organizers.[40] At best, they tried to keep equal distance between the far right protest march and the anti-racist festival, depicting the two merely as 'two opposing views', one side 'against immigrants' and the other 'in favour of immigrants'. Apart from the statements emanating from the festival organizers themselves, there was no articulation of the notion that the far right march had expressed racist and xenophobic discourse and practice culminating in indiscriminate violence, and as such it ought to be denounced and condemned.

4.3 Actors, facts, issues

The group receiving more publicity out of all the recently emerging far right groups is E.LA.M.,[41] perhaps due to the controversy it caused when it decided to contest the 2009 elections for the European Parliament and then the 2011 parliamentary elections in Cyprus, whilst at the same time linking itself to *Chrysi Avgi* in Greece, to clearly fascist ideology and to racist crime. Although ELAM failed to elect a member of parliament in either election, it received the largest percentage (1.08%) out of all parties that contested the election. Commentators at the time suggested that had *ELAM* elected a representative in parliament, it would have been forced to become more political and less criminal, whilst others suggested that had it elected a representative its fascist views would inevitably enter the political mainstream and be given prominence and publicity. The case of *Chrysi Avgi* in Greece would probably suggest that the latter scenario is more likely than the former. Just like its counterparts in Greece, ELAM members regularly parade the streets in black clothing and military formation, in

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[38] Interview with Costas Veis, Head of the Police Bureau Combating Discrimination, 19.08.2010.

[39] This ommission may be atributed to a tendency of the Equality Body not to intervene in events attracting considerable negative publicity. In 2011, presumably under moral pressure to take a more active stand against the dangerously rising phenomenon of racial violence, it conducted a self-initiated investigation using as a departure point an event of a much smaller scale which received very little publicity and had not been debated at the politicla level (Anti-discrimination Authority, 2011).

[40] The Head of the European Commission Representation in Cyprus at the time, who was a speaker at the anti-racist festival, and whose speech was interrupted by the anti-immigrant protesters pulling out the cables from the sound speakers, subsequently told the press that the media reports were so distorted that had she not been present at the event herself, she would have been unable to get a unbiased report of what had happened.

[41] Ethnico Laiko Metopo-English: National Popular Front, http://elamcy.com

traditional fascist tradition, chanting nationalist songs and smashing journalists' cameras. Most of racial attacks carried out by or attributed to ELAM against migrants and Turkish Cypriots, are taking place in broad daylight and in front of dozens of witnesses, although NGOs as well as the Equality Body refer to unreported racial attacks taking place regularly within the unpoliced neighbourhoods with a high migrant population.

The attribution of racial attacks to ELAM is resented by another far right grouping, KEA:[42] Claiming its own piece of the ethno-racist 'pie', KEA strongly opposes ELAM and claims that ELAM appropriates the activities of KEA (such as the attack against the Rainbow Festival in November 2010 and the stabbing of the Turkish Cypriot) trying to make them appear as ELAM's own activities. KEA, one of the organizers of the anti-immigrant protest in Larnaca in November 2010, is a self-declared nationalist group which claims no links with Greece, but believes in union with Greece. They believe in 'guidance of the Nation by the leading minority of the select few, the spiritual aristocracy of the Nation'. Like all other far right groups, they are focused on preventing a federal solution for Cyprus, on anti-Turkishness and on anti-immigration. KEA appears to be working in collaboration with E.F.E.N.[43] which is active at the level of schools and has also been linked to racist crime.[44]

In 2007 two more far right groups emerged with a strong anti-immigration agenda, claiming that migrant flows into Cyprus were orchestrated by Turkey in an effort to change the demographic character: The "Movement of the Salvation of Cyprus"[45] and the "Movement for the European Future of Cyprus"[46] both of which initially tried to distance themselves from the marginal fascist groups but subsequently joined ranks with some of them to stage mass anti-immigrant demonstrations in 2010 and 2011, including the November 2010 march that led to the attack against the Rainbow Festival. These groups involve older and more prominent persons including various public figures such as a former ECHR judge, a former military officer and politicians from mainstream political parties. The list would not be complete without a glance at the football arena, where two of the main right wing football clubs (APOEL and Apollonas) are inter-connected with the far right groups mentioned above and have been repeatedly fined for racist behaviour at the football pitch (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2009b).

The recently emerging organised racist lobby is responsible for a number of publications, often funded by the Greek orthodox Church of Cyprus, and regular media discourses about the imminent and grave 'dangers' from 'Afro-asiatic', 'Muslim-Asiatic' and 'Turko-asiatic' hordes that are ready to invade Cyprus as part of a plan orchestrated by Turkey to change the demographic character of Cyprus through illegal immigration.[47] Studies have shown that there are regular media discourses employing the usual racist fames (Trimikliniotis, 2005). Particular individuals within various political parties,

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[42] Kinima Ellinikis Antistasis – in English: Movement of Greek Resistance [http://antistasi.org].

[43] Ethniki Foni Ellinopsychon Neon- in English: National Voice of Greek-Souled Youth [http://efen-lar.blogspot.com].

[44] An attack against Turkish Cypriot students at a school in Nicosia in 2006 by a group of hooded youth holding bars, which received a lot of publicity as the first organized attack against Turkish Cypriots in decades, was attributed to EFEN. The perpetrators were charged with offences unoconnected to racism and were given sentences of a few hours of community service.

[45] In Greek: Κίνηση για τη Σωτηρία της Κύπρου.

[46] In Greek: Κίνηση για το Ευρωπαϊκό Μέλλον της Κύπρου.

[47] A leaflet was also widely circulated to this effect. For instance in July 2008 the two organisations called 'Movement for the Salvation of Cyprus' and 'Movement for a European Future of Cyprus' announced their intention to hold a public meeting to summon support for their fight against the above 'dangers'. The announcement, which claimed that the keynote speaker would be the Chief of Police, prompted the public to attend the meeting en mass. Complaints were filed with the Cyprus Equality Body (Ombudsman) against the two organising NGOs for violation of the constitutional equality and anti-discrimination principle and for stirring up racial hatred contrary to the criminal code. No action was taken by the prosecution authorities against the organisers for dissemination of racist material.

including centre-right mainstream parties, the various committees for the 'salvation of Cyprus',[48] as well as the neo-Nazi and other far Right-wing groups described above argue that asylum-seekers, migrants and Turkish-Cypriots are abusing the Cypriot welfare benefit system ripping the "golden benefits" of "the Cypriot paradise" and turning Cypriots into "second class citizens" (Morfitis, 2010; Rotsas, 2010).[49] They criticise the Minister of Interior for his 'liberal' migration policy,[50] sometimes even going as far as labelling him as an agent who conspires to distort the population and de-Hellenize Cyprus.[51] Asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants are described as "invaders" as "a fifth column against the Greek element of free Cyprus", claiming that "Hellenism is threatened by asylum-seekers as it is threatened by colonists/settlers in the Turkish occupied territories."[52]

4.4 The Event

When in late October 2010 KEA, PAK and the Movement for the salvation of Cyprus announced their intention to hold a public event against 'illegal immigration', the antiracist organisation KISA, confident after a successful antifascist mobilisation the year before, decided to stage its annual multicultural Rainbow festival, usually taking place in Nicosia, in Larnaka.[53] However, the deepening economic crisis, the rising xenophobia and the political polarisation between Left and Right had meanwhile grown. In addition, the inactivity, divisions and weakness of the anti-racist movement and the moving of the festival, a mild family-type of event to Larnaca, proved to be a tactical mistake. By contrast, anti-immigrant organisations in Larnaca had backing from local conservative MPs and others prominent members of the establishment; this is why KEA claimed to be taking action "*against immigrants which suck the blood of the homeland whether they are characterized illegal or not*":

> "The social abscess and fifth column, bribed by foreign centres and called KISA
> together with foreigners announced a counter-event at the same space and time.
> Recently Muslim foreigners have beaten up savagely our compatriots. The Muslims
> have imposed on the authority the silencing of the bell of Saint Lazarus church in
> Larnaka....We have no other choice. They want war? They will have it![54]"

KISA called for mass participation to the Rainbow festival, projecting its legitimacy and adherence to EU norms by inviting as speakers the Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Cyprus and the Head of the Equality Body. Two days before the event, it announced:

> "... The spreading of racism and intolerance cannot be protected under the cloak of the
> freedom of expression. The messages and the goal of the announced march constitute in

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[48]In these Committees such as the "Movement of the Salvation of Cyprus" [Κίνηση για τη Σωτηρία της Κύπρου] and the Movement for the European Future of Cyprus [Την Κίνηση για το Ευρωπαϊκό Μέλλον της Κύπρου] there are various public figures such as a former ECHR judge, a former military officer and other retired politicians.

[49], Morfitis, the author of several articles using such language, is an official of the right wing party EVROKO and a former Senior Labour Officer at the Minsitry of Labour in charge of migration.

[50] The official website of the right wing party EVROKO hosts a number of articles criticising the government's immigration policy as 'too soft': http://www.evropaikokomma.org/easyconsole.cfm/id/67

[51] Such discourses are normally articulated by Le Pen in France as well as the neo-Nazi group Chrysi Avyi (Χρυσή Αυγή), based in Greece but also operating in Cyprus; its' 'sister organisation' in Cyprus is ELAM. These are repeated by a DESY official and former MP Christos Rotsas in the article with the illuminating title "encouraging our population distortion" («Ενθαρρύνοντας την πληθυσμιακή μας αλλοίωση» in: *Αλήθεια*12.11.2009).

[52] These term was used by the official of DESY Christos Rotsas (2010) **"**Ο Μεγάλος Αυθέντης", in: *Η Σημερινή*, 23.07.2010 http://www.sigmalive.com/simerini/analiseis/other/295061

[53]"The organisation of the Rainbow festival on the same day as the above event will send our anti-racist messages against the presence and action of far right and racist groups in Larnaka", http://falies.com/2010/10/27/%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%AF%CE%BD%CF%89%CF%83% CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%BA%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%B1-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%BF-%CE%BA%CE%AF%CE%BD%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B1-%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B7/

[54] http://antistasi.org/?p=11383

our opinion a violation of articles in the penal code and the constitution itself. We call upon the authorities to assume their responsibilities and ensure that on Friday the nationalists and racists will not threaten and will not offend the participants of the festival with their slogans and presence in any way."[55]

KEA continued with its calls to resist the "dark plans" of the enemies of Hellenism "*against KISA and the rest of the (sic) ethnomidenistes [nation-nihilists]:*"[56]

The Greek race as autochthonous and of the same blood possesses the fatherland from the ancient times and claims it as a right of biological origin and Providence's will.[57]

On 5 November 2010, KEA and the other participants of the other anti-immigrant protest marched with some right-wing politicians. The police, rather than diverting them away from the festival and directing them to reach their stated destination via another route, escorted them to the area where the Rainbow Festival was taking place. As the march was approaching the festival and the racist chants became audible to the festival participants, the festival organisers and some of the participants stood in the street in front of the Festival space. Escorted by the police, the anti-immigrant march opened up the way by pushing. The core of the KEA march rushed to the central stage of the Festival, as the Head of the EC's Representation to Cyprus was delivering her speech, and violently attempted to dismantle it facing resistance from immigrant and Cypriot anti-racists. Some festival participants started to leave; a section of the KEA march continued its march through the festival, whilst another KEA group stayed behind joined by dozens of ELAM paramilitaries threatening the festival participants. Some immigrants and Cypriot festival goers were injured in the skirmishes. A Turkish-Cypriot musician who was to perform at the festival attempted to flee the scene in order to rescue his equipment; he was intercepted by a group of hooded far right protesters who attacked and stabbed him. Eye witnesses reported that the police witnessed the outbreak of violence as bystanders, failing to adequately intervene in order to rescue the festival goers. Instead, the police arresting a few of the festival goers, while other festival organisers were told to pack up immediately and leave because ELAM was coming. After the event the police made a report blaming KISA for the violence and receiving congratulations from KEA. A few months later, charges were brought only against the anti-racist festival organizers; no person from the far right march was charged, even though several were filmed on camera attacking the festival participants.[58] The case against the festival organizers collapsed in June 2012 when the court rejected the case brought by the police against the anti-racists. This development received no publicity whatsoever; by then the issue was forgotten and the economic crisis topped the agenda of politicians and journalists.

4.5 The Aftermath

Beyond the support it got from conservative politicians, both tacit and explicit, and the huge media coverage for its openly racist positions, the anti-immigrant march into the Rainbow Festival was largely tolerated by the wider political spectrum, as many liberals and progressives either remained silent or kept equal distances from "the two extremes". Politis newspaper for example, a liberal newspaper which in the past has been particularly sensitive to the problem of racism often adopting a clear anti-racist stance, in November 2010 was talking about the two extremes which are dogmatic, violent and more or less similar, the rights of the racists to express their opinion publicly, the provocation from the anti-racists and so on. This was more or less the stance of the political parties as

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[55]   Our translation from the Greek statement. Here is the whole statement in english. http://kisa.org.cy/_metacanvas/attach_handler23a2.pdf?attach_id=372&content_type=application/pdf&filename=Rainbow%202010_KISA_PressRelease_EN_031110.pdf

[56]   http://antistasi.org/?p=11420

[57]   http://antistasi.org/?p=11429

[58] Footage from the event,as well as TV media debates and press releases are available on the website of the anti-racist festival organisers KISA-Equality, Support, Anti-racism at http://www.kisa.org.cy/EN/news/662.html

well, with only the ruling left wing party AKEL being the exception in directing its criticism against the racists. But even within AKEL there were different opinions with respect to the extent to which the party should have supported anti-racist mobilizations in general and that one in particular. What is more important, the stabbing of the Turkish Cypriot musician was not considered crucial by the Greek Cypriot media although it made headlines in the north and was exploited by Turkish nationalists. In the south, a new anti-immigrant hysteria was launched against the "so-called political refugees" both by ELAM and by other far right groups appearing as "enraged citizens of Larnaka", assisted by mass media coverage. A couple of anti-immigrant marches took place in Larnaka after the attack against the Rainbow Festival, culminating in an ELAM parade in late December. These were bigger than before but not as big as suggested by the media - revealing the distortions and amplifications which the racist hysteria was subjected to.

In late April 2011 KEA attempted to take a step further and bring its 'victory' to the capital Nicosia, organizing another public event, a discussion and a march, just before the parliamentary elections in mid May. The march was to finish at the area of Phaneromeni, in the old part of Nicosia, known to be an anti-racist 'stronghold.' The march was entitled "Against the checkpoints, the occupation, the settling in the Homeland of Turks and other Muslims."[59] The central slogans were "No to the Islamisation of the Homeland; No to the privileged treatment of the so called Turkish Cypriots; and No to the illegal immigrant-friendly policy of the government." The demand was the closing of the checkpoints[60] and the call included a reference to the need for a mass presence because "*the Turks, the English and AKEL are measuring our will to fight.*"[61] Although not announced, KEA's plan was to stage a protest in the most significant and busy of all checkpoints at Ledra Street whose opening in 2008 was of immense political and symbolic significance for rapprochement between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. There were also fears that KEA could block the movement to and from the checkpoint before moving to the end destination nearby, at Phaneromeni Church where its official ceremony was announced.

As a result of the strong and immediate reaction from anti-racist activists – leftists, alternatives and anarchists, who in response decided to stage their own anti-racist action on the same day, the municipality and the police decided to intervene. Both events were cancelled. KEA prided itself for putting the 'migration problem' on the public agenda after the Larnaka events and this time attempted to make the link with the Cyprus problem more explicit in an announcement that talked about traitors, enemies of Hellenism, about Turks allegedly trafficking in drugs and Muslims immigrants through the checkpoints and so on.[62] It is apparent from the acts of both KEA and the anti-racist groups that the events of November 2010 leading to the attack on the Rainbow festival was a significant contested memory for both, prompting both into dynamic action to claim contested public space. The official response, which was to exert pressure on both sides to back down, was another manifestation of the policy of keeping equal distance from both sides, only this time with a lesser degree of laisser-faire, in an effort not to disturb public order and security.

4.6 Role of the Media

In Cyprus' small society, the role of individual politicians from the Centre-Right and the Far Right in acting as populist 'carriers' and 'articulators' of opinions which are xenophobic, anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and on occasion anti-Semitic, is of particular importance as the media amplifies such views in

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[59]   http://antistasi.org/?p=17014

[60] The checkpoints are crossing points along Cyprus' Green Line, which allow the crossing of persons from the Turkish controlled north to the Greek-Cypriot controlled south and vice versa. The first checkpoints were opened in 2003, allowing movement back and fourth and exchanges between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots for the first time in 30 years.

[61]   http://antistasi.org/?p=17014

[62]   http://antistasi.org/?p=17242

an alarmist and sensationalist fashion. In 2001 ECRI (2001) referred to "a growing tendency towards the perception of the immigrant and the foreigner as a potential threat to the Cypriot standard of living". Government ministers and other political leaders play a decisive role in comments that find their way to media headlines; hence the Second ECRI Report on Cyprus (2001) criticized the 'inflammatory speeches' by certain politicians against immigrant workers:

> ECRI deplores instances of racially-inflammatory speeches by public figures targeting these groups. ECRI strongly encourages the Cypriot authorities to take all possible measures to prevent such a trend from evolving into more overt and generalised manifestations of hostility vis-à-vis members of minority groups.

Subsequent ECRI reports (2006; 2011) confirm the position of media amplification of intolerance and xenophobia. ECRI (2011) notes that "negative attitudes towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are commonly expressed in political discourse and in the media" and that "that there is wide publication in Cyprus of xenophobic articles and sensationalism continues to be common in the media." Such discourses become increasing louder and common these days as media outlets become more and more concentrated in the hands of a few major all-media corporations, which have developed in recent years out of family controlled enterprises, each controlling, print media, radio and TV channels (Christophorou, Şahin and Pavlou,2010)with enormous power to control political developments. The structure of these corporations does not allow any margin for editorial freedom, as journalists are wholly subordinate to the media bosses, who have their own political agendas. Such is the power of the media that when the equality body attempted to issue a binding Code of Conduct for the media on how to avoid racist and xenophobic stereotyping, pressure from the journalists' union resulted in the adoption by the Equality Body of a non-binding set of guidelines instead. The equality body's efforts for a binding document met with resistance from the journalists, who have historically rejected 'external intervention' to the conducting of journalism and dismiss Codes of Conduct as restrictions to the freedom of the press (Anti-discrimination Authority 2010).

4.7 Political measures and policies

Little effort is devoted towards collecting data on racial violence in Cyprus. The only recording mechanism of racist crime is the one maintained by the police, which records a handful of incidents every year, projecting only a small fraction of the problem. By common admission, the Police Bureau for Combating Discrimination which is the department mandated with the recording of racist crime is under staffed, over loaded with other duties and is afforded few resources to be able to carry out this function adequately. In an interview to the authors conducted for the purposes of the 2010 RAXEN Thematic Study "Racist and Related Hate Crimes",[63] the head of this unit explained that his department is understaffed and underfunded and additionally mandated with three other authorities, that of domestic violence, child abuse as well as youth delinquency, adding that often he is confronted with the choice of prioritising between the different pressing needs of the authorities he is heading. The officer acknowledged that the problem of racist crime is certainly much more serious than what the recording mechanism suggests, essentially because there is under-reporting by the victims; he denied any attempt by the police to cover-up or under-record racist crime. The officer was forthcoming and frank in admitting the weaknesses of the current recording mechanism and discussed the difficulties involved in the establishment of a credible, accurate and effective recording system. When asked to comment on the fact that there is an abundance of racial abuse and incitement to racial and other hatred on Cypriot-based websites and blogs, the officer responded that he is aware of this but the resources required to deal with these, in terms of prosecution of these sites are such that go beyond the current priorities. He stated that the police are closely monitoring these sites through their experts but noted the difficulties involved in prosecuting the perpetrators. He referred to a case that received considerable publicity in spring 2010 concerning the death threats against well known

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[63] Interview with Costas Veis, Head of the Police Bureau Combating Discrimination 19.08.2010.

journalist Makarios Drousiotis after he interviewed the Turkish Prime Minister and published an article presenting the Turkish politician in a less of a negative light as is the norm in the Greek Cypriot media. The death threats against the journalist were published in the anti-government blog 'Christofias Watch' following which the journalist applied to the Attorney General requesting him to take measures against this blog. The Attorney General expressed the opinion that the evidence was not adequate to prosecute the blog administrator and thus the charges were dropped. The police officer cited this as an example of the difficulties involved in addressing internet racist crime and of the dilemma in safeguarding freedom of speech. When asked why perpetrators of racially motivated crimes are not charged with offences involving racial motivation, even though the incidents concerned are recorded as 'racist' by his office, the officer pointed out that the final decision on the charges is taken by the Prosecution Service under the direction of the Attorney General based on the evidence before him/her. As a manifestation of the difficulties involved in successfully pursuing a legal action against perpetrators of racist crime, the police officer cited the 2005 case of a racist attack against a Turkish Cypriot by a member of a far right group (Chrysi Avgi – "Golden Dawn") in a high street cafe in the presence of several witnesses; the perpetrator was charged, inter alia, with breach of Article 47(1) of the Criminal Code which prohibits the promotion of hostility between the two communities and the religious groups of Cyprus due to race, religion, colour or sex, but was acquitted by the court for lack of evidence. He added that both this case and the 'Christofias Watch' controversy resulted in criticisms against the police and the government for failing to secure convictions. He added that at least in the other cases of racist attacks, where the perpetrators were prosecuted for lesser offences not involving racist motivation, as was the case of the group attack against Turkish Cypriot pupils by far right youth at the English School in 2006, the prosecution secured convictions, even though the penalty imposed by the Court was only for 'community service'.

Indeed, a rather restrictive approach followed by the Courts in Cyprus renders the securing of convictions a rather difficult task. A year following the acquittal of the Golden Dawn member who assaulted a Turkish Cypriot in public, the Court convicted a Cypriot of African descent for assaulting a group of youth when he chased them away from his home, ignoring the fact that the youth had been harassing him with racial abuse for months before the man chased them away from his house.[64] Then in 2008 the Supreme Court examined an application by Turkish Cypriot relatives of persons missing following an incident of ethnic violence at the village of Tochni in 1974. The applicants, who are relatives of five Turkish Cypriots most probably killed in a massacre which took place in August 1974 at the village of Tochni, when armed Greek Cypriots entered the village and abducted many Turkish Cypriot villagers, who were never seen since. The applicants sought a Court declaration stating that the state did not do everything necessary to investigate what happened to their missing relatives, to locate their remains and to bring the guilty persons to trial. The Supreme Court found that the review of governmental acts was not within the mandate given to the Supreme Court under article 146 of the Constitution (which deals with the review of administrative acts) and therefore it lacked jurisdiction to try the case.[65] The situation as regards convictions is at last beginning to change, presumably as a result of pressure from EU institutions; in 2012 there was one conviction by the Courts for racist crime[66] and two more cases were pending in Court at the time of writing.

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[64] The case was *The Attorney General v. Jean Mistrellides*, where judgement was issued on 20.1.2006 by the District Court of Nicosia against the defendant-victim of racial abuse, who was fined for allegedly having attacked the youth that had been roaming around his house shouting racial abuse for months. An equality body report regarding this case criticised the handling by the police and, in particular, the police's failure to protect Mistrellides against the racial harassment.

[65] Ozalp Behic alias Ozalp Saricaoglu, Ece Behic alias Ece Kasif alias Firtinaer, Suzan Behic alias Suzan Saricaoglu v. The Republic of Cyprus through the Attorney General, the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Interior, Supreme Court of Cyprus, Case no. 589/2006 (29.05.2008).

[66] Case no. 5305/2009, where the defendant was convicted for a racial offence under the 1967 UN convnetion (TAE 197 2009). We are informed that it is a case of violence against a black African man in a club in Limassol, where the bouncers of the club assaulted the man after he denying him entry to the club. No further details are available. There are currently at least another two cases continuing in court.

Whilst the official indicators do not tell much about trends, the unofficial indicators illustrate that racial hate crime is on the increase. Some racial attacks receive media attention, such as the ones described earlier in the report, and some do not. Several racial incidents are also related to sports, such as the attack on Turkish-Cypriot fans of OMONIA by Greek-Cypriot APOEL fans outside the club on one of the main boulevards of Nicosia and the attack on the teenage black Cypriot girl who was playing volleyball for her school team. Referring to the latter incident KISA, the anti-racist NGO that staged the Rainbow Festival, said: "This is one of the most serious crimes concerning racist violence in Cyprus, since the reason of the attack was the young girl's skin colour. She is a Cypriot national of African origin… The incident may be an unusually extreme form of racist violence, but it nevertheless takes place in a broader social framework, where racist attitudes and discrimination against migrants and refugees (concerning employment, housing and other aspects of daily life) now dominate. [...] Unfortunately, the racist venom has been allowed to poison the souls of a portion of our youth..."[67] It has been suggested that "the problem is not that there is a small, extreme, racist minority opposing the presence of migrants that makes their lives difficult" but "the larger problem is that the majority simply does not care about the experience, conditions, problems, or joys of migrants in Cyprus and this perpetuates a situation of 'living apart' and not 'together'" (Demetriou, 2008). Or it may well be the case that antiracists and a significant portion of the more sensitive population do not react immediately, fearful of the tradition of violence of the extreme right in Cypriot history over the last 60 years, particularly during the period of inter-ethnic violence (1963-1974).

The inadequacy of measures to combat racial hatred has enabled the surfacing of the 'hard core' of what was in 2000 about ten per cent amongst the Greek-Cypriot youth who expressed a racist predisposition (Charakis and Sitas, 2004; Charakis et al, 2005) . Once the general climate allowed it and the organisational framework was offered by the newly-formed extreme Right, neo-Nazi groups were imported mainly from Greece and were organised more effectively. Empirical data over the last decade shows that the problem of racism and intolerance has not been dented, despite the policy, institutional and educational improvement (ECRI, 2006; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2007; 2009a; Trimikliniotis,1999; 2004; Trimikliniotis and Pantelides, 2003; Papamichael, 2008) . The research findings are instructive in that they provide the basis in order to sociologically explain and interpret the phenomena of racism and intolerance. In a study conducted on racism in sport (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2009b) important shifts in the behaviour of youth were observed which may explain the level, intensity and perpetuation of racist and intolerant tendencies, allowing the assessment of the impact of policies. The conclusion was that despite the enhanced repressive measures imposed in and around sport, racism and intolerance are far from being eradicated. Rather, what has emerged is a transformation manifested in three trends:

- The first trend is towards *shifting* or a *transfer* of racist behaviour into arenas where there is no system of surveillance, repression and proper monitoring, in the fashion that football violence has been transferred to lower divisions in the UK and elsewhere following the repressive and surveillance measures taken (Tsoukala, 2009). It may well be that there is also a shifting to younger ages but this needs to be properly investigated as a research hypothesis.

- In terms of the reported and recorded cases, an increase in violent racist incidents can be observed which may not necessarily mean that there is more racial violence now, but rather more awareness and better systems of reporting, complaining and investigating. Nor does it mean that there is no expression of political will by the education authorities; on the contrary we have had the strongest ever expressions of political will to stamp out racism. However, racism is a problem accumulated over the years, which was not properly tackled via anti-racist education, as indicated also by an equality body report on a racial violence incident (Anti-discrimination Authority, 2009). More seriously, there seems to be resistance by organised teachers to treat racist violence as a more serious aggravating factor, preferring the more generalised "youth deviance" or "delinquency"

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[67] KISA news release on 20.12.2008.

version.[68] Similarly, the approach of the Cyprus Football Association and the sports authorities at large is one of general complacency as pointed out by one scholar (Kassimeris, 2008: 34).

- It may well be the case that the ten percent of youths with an overtly racist disposition that the study of Charakis and Sitas (2004:155) has located have become *more* violent or *more* organised. In terms of policy, it may well indicate that the prima facie 'success' of combating racism on the football pitch was only superficial and was restricted to the repression of racist symbols and slogans. And that in the absence of a more effective general policy to eradicate racism through education rendering racism socially and politically unacceptable, racism spread to a greater number of youths in the way of the 'negative scenario' predicted by Charakis and Sitas (Charakis and Sitas, 2004: 153). Of course such contentions require further research and analysis, but they are certainly plausible explanations for the recent rise in racial violence.

In spite of the anti-immigrant activity of the far right groups observed in the past few years, no racial violence or even anti-immigrant protests were reported since Cyprus assumed the Presidency of the European Council in July 2012, which lends itself as the date for the abrupt cut-off of far right activity and far right mobilizations. This may be attributed partly to more persistent policing or even to an agreement for a kind of 'truce' reached between the police and the far right groups for the sake and for the duration of the Presidency. In any case, this scenario falls in line with previous policy goals of the police and of the authorities in general to attempt to hide the problem in an effort to show a good face to their EU partners. Thus, Cypriot society is yet to witness the impact of *Chrysi Avgi* entering the Greek Parliament on the type and level of activity of ELAM and the other far right groups, as this activity is now somehow on hold, presumably until the end of the Cypriot Presidency. An interesting development was the participation of ELAM in a protest staged by single parents outside Parliament in June 2012 to complain against the reduction of state benefits, as it signifies the adoption of methods and tactics used by Chrysi Avgi in Greece who publicly and visibly support vulnerable groups in a bid to expose the inadequacies of state support and earn votes.

5. Conclusion

The rise in far right politics cannot be viewed in isolation, as an event affecting only one country or one region. The manner of operation of democratic institutions including public accountability has led to the rise of populist politics and populist politicians, whose power is growing with the deepening of the global economic crisis.

Media depictions of the Event, the interpretation offered by mainstream politicians and the treatment afforded to it by the police and the prosecution authorities, have cumulatively shifted the terms of the debate in the direction of legitimizing ethno-racial intolerance. Thus, the dominant liberal frame has paradoxically moved towards accepting racism and intolerance as a legitimate point of view which is entitled to space in the public domain. In the aftermath of the Event, racist, xenophobic and intolerant discourses parade regularly in the media whilst it is now perfectly legitimate to include in the public media panellists from neo-Nazi and other far Right organizations as 'the other point of view' that needs to be heard in order to have a balanced representation. Despite the fact that in recent years new laws came into force strengthening the legal regime for addressing ethno-racial hatred and hate speech,[69] the reality on the ground appears to have shifted the terms of the debate towards the opposite direction, that of mainstreaming hate speech as an emerging norm. The production of movies and the publication of cartoons which are offensive to Muslims are a wider manifestation of this trend,

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[68] In 2009, the Equality Body criticised the approach taken by teachers, who to this day refuse to recognise that the attack on the African pupil was racist (Anti-discrimination Authority, 2009).

[69] On 21.10.2011 a law came into effect (Law N. 134(I)/2011) transposing the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.

especially in the post 9/11 era, finding fertile ground in countries where levels of Islamophobia are high and unemployment and crime are linked by populists to the presence of Muslims. At the micro level, in a public symposium organised by the Cypriot Parliament in May 2012 to commemorate World War II,[70] the book exhibition held by the Union of Booksellers at the venue's entrance included David Irvine's Holocaust denial books and Hitler's *Mein Kampf,* an initiative that caused the reaction of only a couple of intellectuals attending the symposium.

What emerged after the Event was the consolidation of a tendency that was apparent prior to that, albeit previously it was present in a more abstract and fragmented fashion. This trend is premised upon the rather twisted but nevertheless prevailing logic, which reverses the terms against anti-racism and tolerance: despite the clear legal framework which puts racism on the spot, in practice it is the anti-racists who are being criminalized as perpetrators and instigators of violence, at the service of the 'enemy' and against 'our' people. Through the participation of representatives from the far right in the public debate and the public sphere in general, the terms of the debate have changed: immigrants are no longer construed as merely the 'other' but rather as the enemy that must be fought against by the patriotic forces. Whilst far right views are regularly aired in the mass media, and as the anti-racist camp is framed and labelled as 'unpatriotic' and as 'foreign agents,' anti-racism and tolerance towards diversity, as ideologies, are increasingly approached with suspicion and are quickly losing ground amongst mainstream society. By contrast, racism and intolerance are increasingly finding fertile ground amongst the sectors most hardly hit by the economic crisis. After the Event, the hostility towards anti-racists was officialised with the prosecution of three anti-racists, whilst the anti-immigrant camp was not only left intact but in fact was justified by the prosecution of the anti-racists. Whatever sympathetic discourse towards migrants and Turkish Cypriots had previously been adopted by the current government was, in the face of this backlash, neutralized and rendered incapable of halting this process.

On the side of the polarization, we have the development of a *perverse liberalism* which poses ethno-racial intolerance as an integral part of 'liberal tolerance' and the democratic game. Liberal democratic tolerance becomes the breeding ground and the reproductive mechanism for ethno-racial intolerance. This is another aspect of the 'democratic paradox' or the 'liberal paradox', which extends beyond the formulations of both Chantal Mouffe (2000) and Hollifield (2004) respectively. The hypothesis of this report is premised on five key propositions, which work together forming an *apparatus* or *dispositif*(Agamben,2009): the processes of (re)construction of (in)tolerance are examined in the particular context of the construction and aftermath of the *Event*. What makes this interesting beyond the local boundaries is an interplay of the particularities drawn from the Cypriot socio-political and historical landscape and influences derived from being situated within the broader European/eastern Mediterranean context. This is based on five key factors:
First, we are increasingly witnessing an *under-valuing and trivialization of the breadth of the problem of racial violence and intolerance* in Cyprus, Greece and Europe and a persistent failure to see the connection between the rise of new breads of neo-Nazis and far right ideologies. In European societies increasingly resembling the 'society of the spectacle' (Debord, 1977) there is a process leading to the persistent trivialization together with an increasingly legitimized sympathetic revisionism, which appears 'benign' of both historical Fascism/Nazism and the local para-fascistic and far Right phenomena of the past. It is no coincidence that the issue of public history has become the subject of the 'wars of memory' in the media that sensationalizes and scandalizes History, until recently considered to be the most boring school lesson, as "the new sex" for the media:[71] paradoxically the life-style of figures like Hitler are so popular with the History Channel[72] that it was sardonically branded as the 'Hitler Channel'. History is losing its critical edge; it is no longer a tool for critical

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[70] House of Representatives Symposium entitled "World Wars I and II, 10 Years of horror, 81 million lives perished', held at the Hilton Nicosia on 23 May 2012.

[71] The phrase 'Wars of Memory' is borrowed from Hagen Fleischer*'s book of same title (2012).*

[72] In Germany alone there are four million viewers per episode (Fleischer, 2012:37)

thinking about the past so that citizens can learn about the political, social and other factors which shape the world and never repeat past errors, violence and atrocities, but just another form of light entertainment where the subtle messages are nevertheless transmitted.

Second, the construction of 'free speech' and 'pluralism' as a liberal democratic right, at least in the Greek-Cypriot and Greek (i.e. of the Hellenic Republic) context has resulted in the re-legitimization of 'schools of thought' which had been legally, ideologically and morally discredited in the 1970s: far right ideologies such as Nazism/Fascism as well as other ideologies connected to the Greek junta and the far right of Greek-Cypriot politics have emerged in new forms and gained momentum with followers too young to remember (or unborn at the time) when these became synonymous with war, disaster and shame.

Third, the new far right agenda is essentially a new racial and anti-immigrant agenda articulated within the national and global security agenda. It has a technical militarist and securitization dimension as well as a quasi-sociological/ social psychological aspect: *migration becomes increasingly securitized*, as identity politics are themselves becoming increasingly securitized. The national identity and well-being is perceived as being threatened by migration and ethnic dilution in a mass hysteria of collective existential angst.

 Fourth, the academic/research community, increasingly bureaucratized and used in order to offer technocratic insights and lend legitimacy to various aspects of social, economic and political life, has failed to identify and pin down the new racial agendas. The few exceptions are routinely censored, ignored or side-stepped in the media and public discourses. Overall, there is academic aloofness or avoidance to engage in serious research which results in an under-estimation and trivialization of the actual threat of the racial agendas and discourses. Whenever there is an eruption of racial violence, there is also an expression of shock, revulsion and dismay. However, no effort is dispensed to address the deep-rooted causes of such events, to discuss the systemic and policy failures that led to them and the transformations required. Moreover, revisionism about Fascism and Nazism in Europe is becoming more acceptable even in academic circles. There is also a slow but steady revisionism in terms of the public symbolisms over the Greek-Cypriot far Right: it was made socio-politically and morally repugnant and marginalized after the 1974 watershed, but is now being rehabilitated by the mainstream political forces and the current church leadership. In the era of economic crisis and securitization there is new ideological vigour in the far Right in a sense of 'national unity' against the security risks posed by the migrants, the ethnic and religious groups and minorities. Various academics and scientists are lending their names to these 'national causes'.

Fifth, the combination of legal impunity for the perpetrators of ethnic and racial violence, including the toleration of ethnic violence of the previous decades (from the 1950s to 1974) for the sake of 'national unity', combined with the deployment of the 'doctrine of necessity' in order to serve 'national ends,' is a legacy breeding further intolerance and impunity. This is in fact often expressed as political tolerance of discourses, practices and organizations promoting ethnic hatred and intolerance, which strengthens and encourages the far Right and its agenda.

Policy relevant conclusions must respond with reversing the five factors above. In addition, specific policy recommendations can be drawn from the study:
- An effective data collection mechanism for recording racial crime, including hate speech, is necessary in order to locate and evaluate the problem or racial/ethnic and religious/cultural intolerance in society.

- A resourceful team must be nominated, dedicated to legal battles at the national and the European level when necessary, in order to bend the inflexibility, persistence on technicality and narrow interpretations of the national courts, who systematically apply antiquated national laws over laws transposing the EU acquis, ignoring both ECHR and ECJ rulings.

- Institutional support to anti-racist organisations.

- Awareness raising campaigns to delegitimize far right politics, media sensationalism and political populism, to identify racism and legitimize anti-racism, currently viewed as the other side of the coin from racism.

- Anti-racist education must become meaningful and must be integrated across the national curriculum.

A polarisation occurs as a result of a consciousness developing in the exact opposite direction, providing viable alternatives to the five factors above and challenging the very basis of *perverse liberalism*. On this point, reference may be made to the sociological and normative foundations that provide the potential for negation and transcendence of the current reality. Nevertheless, the potential for a *meaningful* diversity discourse within national, European and global traditions (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2011) still persists. As already discussed, tolerance and intolerance were shaped by the legacy of colonialism and post-colonialism and by the current institutional framework of political life in Cyprus, particularly the Cypriot state of exception. The democratic paradox of tolerance breeding intolerance, discussed above, has also brought about an ambivalence within such consciousness, where the xenophobic and racist elements coexist with a solidarity-based set of values.

At the institutional level, this means countering and challenging the logics of reproduction and exceptionalism, the perception of 'national emergency' resulting from the migratory flows and the increasing securitization of immigration. Such siege mentalities draw on and redefine the Cyprus problem as a force generating a legal vacuum blurring the distinction between legality and illegality, normality and abnormality, opening up margins for those in power to extend their discretion to authoritarian statism. A precondition for overcoming this is to negate and challenge the very logic of exceptionalism. However, this must be rooted in the Cypriot social and political reality, whilst at the same time it ought to draw on the traditions, ideas, norms and processes of other European and global contexts.

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