

Police Reform and Social Change in Greece: the Development and Merger of the Gendarmerie and Urban Police Forces

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The reform of the Greek police that took place in 1984 is a development that has received almost no scholarly attention, but it took the form of a merger between two historically independent police forces that had previously dominated law-enforcement operations within Greece – the Gendarmerie and the Urban Police. Following the introduction, a detailed historical analysis traces the roots of the particular features and unique characteristics of the two police forces up to the period of reform and merger in the 1980s. The changing political and social characteristics of the two agencies reflect the maturing of the Greek nation from a pseudo-State to a modern western type society. The paper highlights the overlooked importance of the Plakias Report of 1982, thus providing key insights into the aims and ambitions of the subsequent 1984 law. The paper concludes that the merger, although a difficult socio-political endeavour, created the basis for more accountable and democratic policing in Greece.

Keywords: police reform, mergers, urban and rural police, history, accountability, Greece

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1 Introduction

In 1981, a major change in Greek politics occurred with the election of the first socialist government after decades of conservative rule. The new Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, was determined to change the relationship between the organised State and society, and modernise basic institutions:

The creation of a 'society of citizens' where the State will be subjected to civilian control and will serve the citizens, requires the modernization, the democratisation and finally the transformation of all State authority means (Preliminary/Explanatory Report to the Greek Parliament, August 20th, 1984).

The subsequent reform of the Greek police that took place in 1984, is a development that has received little scholarly attention. Two exceptions are Papakonstantis (2003), a Ph.D. study of the history and reorganisation of the Greek police, and Stergioulis (2001), another Ph.D., examining the Greek police from a sociological point of view. Although thorough

in other respects, these two studies only mention the matter of the crucial merger of the Gendarmerie and Urban police in passing, as one point in the history of the Greek police. This paper draws on a Ph.D. study (Douvlis, 2013) that focused in particular upon the merger.³

The reform represented by this merger was a dramatic moment and significant organisational achievement that has left a still-visible legacy for the policing of modern Greek society. At its heart was a project of organisational modernization, to bring together the two historically independent police forces that had dominated law-enforcement, the Gendarmerie and the Urban Police. However, the merger was also a reflection of wider social changes in the country.

Over thirty years later, at a time of considerable further political change and challenge in Greece (Anastasakis &

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³ To briefly define the two forces. The Greek Gendarmerie was a quasi-military law enforcement agency, founded in accordance with the rules and regulations of the French Gendarmerie on June 3, 1833, and originally tasked with the pursuit of bandits. The Greek Urban Police were established in response to the growth of urban centres. In 1919, the London Metropolitan Police assisted with training and leading this new force. The first urban police department was created on the island of Corfu on October 1, 1921, followed by urban police departments in the cities of Patras on April 22, 1922, Piraeus on May 28, 1923 and Athens on January 15, 1925 (Theodoropoulos, n. d.: 188).

Singh, 2012), it is timely to reflect on this specific re-invention of a key institution of the modern state. This is illuminating with regard to comparative and historical scholarship on policing but also because, as Loader (1997) points out, changes in policing are also highly symbolic and significant reflections of wider social changes. The article therefore identifies and discusses key social and political developments and concerns that have shaped the symbolic (as well as functional) roles of policing in the Greek context prior to the 1984 merger. For example, in common with other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, over the course of the last century and into the new decades of the 21st, Greece has experienced 'turbulence rather than stability', including a 'succession of political regimes, democracy in action, and the worst manifestations of totalitarianism' (Meško, Sotlar, & Lobnikar, 2014: 606).

While recognising that there are many complexities to policing in south-eastern Europe, including some shared historical developments and various similarities and differences, here we are only able to focus on a series of key stages in the history of policing in Greece. The paper first offers a critical discussion of policing in Greece prior to the merger, providing a contextual background knowledge by using historical examples and making reference to other studies of policing in Greece. It then considers the influences on the shaping of the merger, in particular the 'blueprint' Plakias Report and how this contributed to the political will to implement change.

Although not quoted here, key stakeholders engaged with the process of merger and police service development in the subsequent period were interviewed for the doctoral dissertation, and these interviews inform the chronology and analysis presented.

2 Background

The word 'police' itself was invented in Greece, derived from the word 'politia', meaning the "sum of all State authorities" (Stamatis, 1971: 19) or as Aristotle puts it, 'the good order, the government of the town, the support of the people, the first and greatest of all gifts' (Flynn, 1997: 6). Plato called it the 'regulation of the city by law' and Isokrates 'the soul of the city, the symbol of intelligence, the constantly thinking and regulating of every evil and handling of every disaster' (Stamatis, 1971: 19). The term "politia", used in Rome, was adopted in France, and then in England, as 'police', in Germany as 'Polizei', and in Italy as 'polizia'. Policing can be seen as providing the state with the means by which functions of administration, welfare, protection and surveillance are fulfilled.

In its long history, Greece has had a number of law enforcement agencies which can be traced back to the 5th Century B.C. when the glory of the city-state of Athens began under the command of a legendary figure in Greek history, Pericles. Although the focal point here is the more recent history of policing in Greece, it is important to set the context in terms of 'the influence of outsiders' (Meško et al., 2014: 608), in particular the French and English models of policing that had adopted this Greek term but then developed the concept in different ways. The English influence came in the early 20th century, but the French model had an earlier and clearly visible impact on the development of Greek policing. As Meško and colleagues (2014: 609) note, 'the French heritage can be seen throughout Europe' and particularly in countries associated with Austro-Hungarian and German political administrations where the Napoleonic style of policing was common until the end of World War II.

3 The Formation of the Greek Gendarmerie

On September 27, 1831 the first governor of free Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias, was assassinated and in order to ensure the stability of the new State, under the Convention of London of 1832, the major European powers of the day contrived a transfer of authority to a Bavarian prince who became the first modern King of Greece. The arrival of King Otto was also to lead to changes in the nature and future of policing in Greece.

Until then, authority in Greek territories (the state itself having only just been established) had been applied locally and communally, and King Otto attempted to alter that loose structure and establish a central authority. Predictably, as this was the first attempt to reform this system, resistance and some conflict followed. Various autonomous groups emerged, including so-called "bandits" (the term in Greek is 'Listes'). As a first response, on April 25, 1833, King Otto established the "Ethnofylaki" (meaning National Guard), which was not a police force within the ordinary meaning of the term, and did not have a permanent presence and structure although on many occasions it acted as the police. Based on a draft system, all males between 21–50 years old were obliged to offer their services without pay (Theodoropoulos, n. d.: 154). On June 3, 1833 the new force of the Gendarmes was officially created by Royal Decree. Its mission, as reported in the government newspaper of that date, was to:

Lay the foundations and preserve public safety and keep a vigilant eye in order to prevent any public disturbance, [or] any criminal act [...] and enforce the Laws in the entire Greek province, including the barracks and the military (Daskalakis, 1973: 38).

3.1 The Bandits and Their Importance in the Shaping of Early Greek Policing

Various rebel and bandit groups were remnants of revolutionary forces that had fought for independence against the Ottoman Empire. According to Daskalakis (1973: 45), “the deeply rooted habits that the men of the Greek Liberation struggle had acquired over the years, was the causal factor for the creation of the bandits.” Politicians often hired bandit gangs as a private force to encourage political support.

From 1833, the newly formed state began efforts to dismantle these groups following a new bill of law (March 8, 1833 “ordinance concerning the dismantlement of Rebels”), a move that was instigated for several reasons. First, as a reflection of “the King’s desire to create a western-type Army”, but also for political ends. By dismantling the guerrillas, the King deprived the existing political parties of their most important constituencies (Koliopoulos, 2005: 20).

Having fought for and celebrated the spirit of independence, the veterans of the war considered themselves to be ‘pillars’ of the sovereign Greek state; however many now found themselves feeling excluded from the new society. Some provision was made for the incorporation of 2,000 guerrillas into a newly formed Army light infantry division, but since the rebel troops were far too numerous for all to be recruited, many were left unemployed, cut adrift and languished in the Greek periphery. Some historians estimate their numbers at 5,000, while others estimate 13,000 (Koliopoulos, 2005: 20). As a result, according to Hobsbawm (2000: 37), some of those excluded from the ‘new’ state but also unable to integrate into traditional rural society, found refuge in social banditry.

3.2 The ‘Founding Fathers’ of the Gendarmerie and the Challenges Faced

Daskalakis (1973: 36) notes that, before the new law enforcement agency could be established, ‘there had to be an internal discipline and operational code’ and in formulating this, ‘all major European law enforcement agencies codes were studied, with the French Gendarmerie being the focal point, since it was considered to be the best-organized agency in Europe.’

The French code was first translated into German (for the German King of Greece to understand) and then into Greek by Major Skarlatos Soutsos. With the required modifications that reflected the ideals and notions of the German Head of State, it was then officially adopted and enforced. However, as Karavitis and Danousis (1997) explain, this double language translation, combined with the lack of equivalent police ter-

minology in Greek and the hasty attempt to devise the code, led to many misunderstandings with regard to both the terms and the substance of what was adopted.

The official creation of the new law enforcement agency – called “Elliniki Horofylaki” – meaning “Greek Gendarmerie” – was marked by the publication of a new bill of law on May 20, 1833. The first Chief of the Greek Gendarmerie was the French Colonel Francis Gagiari, who had fought on the side of the Greeks in their conflict with the Turks (Karavitis & Danousis, 1997: 38). Interestingly, whenever a translator-editor had doubts about whether the translation of the code and related matters was accurate, the French term was included in parenthesis (Daskalakis, 1973: 36), embedding these foreign influences further.

Article 2 of the founding Law mentions the ‘dual nature’ of the Gendarmerie, meaning that the force was not seen simply as a minor police service, and furthermore, no rigid limits were imposed on its structure. Rather, as well as fulfilling familiar duties related to crime fighting, public order and so forth, the Gendarmerie was also intended to be a military police force and to support other administrative services. Later in 1836, municipal police laws were published that established municipal policing as more of a reflection of local interests and Karavitis and Danousis (1997: 36) argue that there was therefore, even at that time, a basic distinction being drawn between local and general policing. On May 17, 1835, a document concerning the “internal Rules of Conduct for the Greek Gendarmerie” was published in the government’s gazette which contained a specific and detailed description of the duties for various posts of command, and the relations of the post holders to other agencies and government authorities. Duties included the following: the appointed Chief of the Greek Gendarmerie had to be vigilant to ensure the proper execution of police duties by all police officers, punish and repudiate all wrongdoings, and submit reports on the performance of each officer; the duties of commanders, majors, sergeants, and other officers were defined; and reference was made to the duties of police patrols concerning illegal merchants, smuggling, forest protection, and disturbances of the peace, street fighting, panhandling and other crimes.

This breadth of activities and responsibilities included some duties, such as forest protection, that appeared peripheral to the main mission of the Gendarmerie and suggests that while there was keen political interest in the formation of the police force, this was not always clearly focused. Political interventions and whim led to alterations in manpower and to various laws and amendments concerning reorganisation. The creation of the first police academy was also delayed for a few years because it was hard to gather all active sergeants from across the country in one place for training. Finally, on

July 7, 1842, an academy was founded under Lt. Dragonas, and began training in infantry drills, use of firearms, fencing, reading and writing, geometry, interrogation techniques, and the requirements of the internal rules of conduct. The duration of training for new recruits was six months.

4 The Emergence of the Urban Police: The Establishment of a Professional, Civil Police Force

Following the reorganisation, the Greek Gendarmerie was more militarised and more disciplined but, according to its critics, what it was not was a 'modern' police force that met the needs of a growing urban society. New social conditions had been created and had to be confronted by a police force with a professional structure, training, education and an enhanced understanding of the social forces and realities that defined modern city life. As elsewhere, the rapid development of the 'urban class' had to be met by a civilian and more legitimate and trusted police force (Loader, 2002; Tyler, 2004; Zedner 2005). In 1920, the 'Urban Police' was created in Greece as a force complementary to the Gendarmerie, and this was the official enactment of the dual policing system in Greece, which lasted until the 1984 merger.

Then Minister of the Interior, Konstantinos Raktivan, understood that the conditions in urban centres were far different to those of rural areas and hence there was a need to establish a force that reflected modern civil society. In other words, one that was civilian and not military. These were the same conditions that fostered similar changes in law enforcement in England, the US and France, so Greece could not be an exception (Stergioulis, 2001: 43). Indeed, Colonel Garigliota, who had led the reorganization of the Gendarmerie, supported the creation of a new police force that could act in ways that the Gendarmerie could not. As Stamatis (1971: 86) observed, the Gendarmerie were a military force with an aggressive approach to combating disorder that was unacceptable in urban centres. Stamatis (1971: 99–100) refers to a report provided by *Francesco d' Aulicio Garigliota* on the Italian mission which visited Greece in 1914 to advise on restructuring the Gendarmerie and on policing in general. The Italian mission, although having nothing to do with the creation and training of the future Urban Police, concluded that the State should create a new, more scientifically orientated force. This was to be based on Western standards, follow the lessons of international developments in policing and apply them to urban centres in Greece. Failure to do this would mean that there would be neither respect for the Gendarmerie nor an efficient urban police force.

The Italian recommendations were clear: there had to be a separation between urban and rural policing, and a special force was needed in order to police urban communities. Although the government did not immediately accept the proposals (Theodoropoulos, n. d.: 191), most Gendarmerie officers accepted them because they believed that greater professional opportunities would follow. Another factor that led to the creation of an urban police force was a shift in crime patterns. Writing about this structural reform, Ioannis Nastos, Chief of City Police (Stamatis, 1973: 101), observed that crime as a social phenomenon took a different form after WWI in many nations, and this had stimulated reorganisation and restructuring of police agencies around the world. He noted that new populations coming from old and new urban centres, as well as new crime patterns, demanded a new police force. This was also supported by urban police officers themselves. *Sarantos Antonakos* (Urban police General, Retired) writes: 'Many tried to discourage us, by saying that when you police Athens things will be different. You will face organised crime here, don't forget that.' (*Urban Police Chronicles*, 15: 2, in Stamatis, 1971). Reiner (2000: 17) makes a similar point when he mentions that the growing cities were perceived as the ideal breeding grounds for crime due to an environment of anonymity which fostered disorder. *Kathimerini*, a respected Greek newspaper, built on this idea by arguing that the capital's needs for order, security, and cleanliness are greater than rural places and definitely more complex, hence a new police force was required (Stamatis, 1971: 188).

In due course, Law 1370 of 1918 outlined the differentiation between Urban Police and Gendarmerie and stated that: "A new police will be instituted in Athens, Piraeus, Patras, Thessaloniki and Corfu for the police functions [...] limiting the Gendarmerie to the duties of Public safety" (Papakonstantis, 2003: 123). Having re-organised the Army and Navy in the mid-1910s, the Government of the day, led by Prime Minister Venizelos, now turned attention to the police and decided to consult the London Metropolitan Police for advice on the creation of an urban police. A British Organizing Mission was invited to Greece in order to study the system and implement re-organization. This mission arrived in Greece in late 1918 for preparatory work and consisted of Sir Frederick Lock Halliday, who was appointed Chief, and Messrs. Sloman, Coug, Brumier and Read, who were given roles in the administration of the Cadet Academy and various other functions (Stamatis, 1971: 102). Facilitated by a new Bill of Law issued in 1919 (Stamatis, 1971) his mission remained in Greece until 1928 when Colonel Cook took over, several years later turning over leadership of the Urban Police to Remantas-Veis, a Greek of Egyptian citizenship who was recruited to lead the force (Theodoropoulos, n. d.: 189).

5 The Gendarmerie in World War II

The history of the Gendarmerie is interrelated with major socio-political events in Greece during and after World War II. Political instability, riots, revolts, guerrilla wars, and social turmoil have impacted a force which was involved in violence and suppression. As in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, policing during and following World War II was often associated with illegitimacy and distrust by the population (Meško et al., 2014: 608–611). It is impossible to cover all aspects of this history and much has been examined elsewhere (e.g. Daskalakis, 1973), but it is imperative to note that the Gendarmerie became the subject of hatred for the Communists – and the legacy of this antipathy helped to shape the later socialist political agenda. In order to explain this, it is important to describe the Gendarmerie's actions during World War II and the German occupation of Athens, one of the most painful episodes in Greek history.

5.1 Occupation and Law Enforcement

On October 28, 1940 the Italian Ambassador to Greece visited the Greek Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas, and asked him to ensure the free passage of Italian troops. This was a polite way of asking Greece to surrender, and the Prime Minister responded with a rejection of the offer, saying “so, we are at war”, and a Royal Order was issued to begin preparations for war from that night onwards. (This incident remained in Greek history as the “Ohi Day”, ‘ohi’ meaning ‘no’ in Greek.)

The Greek Gendarmerie, a military force by nature, played an important role both in these preparations and related actions (Daskalakis, 1973: 88), including oversight of the drafting of all eligible men to serve and, simultaneously, the confinement of all persons considered dangerous to the well-being of the nation and State. Since the Greek Prime Minister was a right-wing dictator, Communists were considered outlaws and hence imprisoned.

During the first days of the Italian invasion, the Gendarmerie played a decisive role. Due to the nature of the Greek-Albanian borders (long, mountainous, with practically no roads), the mission of the Gendarmes was to delay the Italians until military troops could arrive at the scene. Many (subsequently glorified) battles were fought and won by the Gendarmes who became legendary for their resistance and played a pivotal role in the final defeat of the Italians. However, following this defeat, Hitler dispatched German military forces to enforce Greek compliance, resulting in an invasion of the country and the fall of Athens to the occupation on April 27, 1941. From this point on, controversy has been attached to the role of law enforcement during this period.

Immediately after the German occupation of Athens, law enforcement agencies were ordered by the last remaining Greek General Kavrakos, to remain in their posts in order to ensure public order. The presence of Greek law enforcement agencies under German rule, although apparently desired by both the Greek people and the exiled Greek government, was perceived by many (especially the Communists) as an act of treason against the Greek people, serving the interests of the occupation. For some, the Gendarmerie therefore came to be seen as a force that represented the oppression of the Greek people (Papakonstantis, 2003: 126). During the period of German occupation (1941–1945), a number of anti-German organisations were formed and a guerrilla war against occupation troops began. Among these patriotic forces were some that maintained close co-operation with the Gendarmerie. However, as Daskalakis (1971: 176–177) records, from 1942 a Communist organization called EAM (Greek initials meaning National Liberation Front) began to focus activities less on German and Italian occupying troops and instead engaged in hostile acts against Greek law enforcement and other civilians who were considered collaborators and ‘traitors to the nation.’

When the German occupation ended in October 1944, the Communist guerrilla forces refused to surrender their weapons and arrived in Athens with the aim of taking control of the nation's capital – and the government. What followed was a fierce armed confrontation, as the communists and Gendarmes fought. The communists were defeated and retreated to the mountainous areas of the countryside where they began a guerrilla war against the organised State. This was more than simply a retreat, and the prelude to the fierce Greek Civil War that took place after the end of WW II in the period from 1945 until 1949, finally ending with the defeat of the Communists. One lasting legacy was that during subsequent decades, the Left retained a distrust and dislike of the Gendarmerie which they saw as a symbol of oppression – a view that would be influential in different political times.

While some parts of Eastern, Central and Southern Europe fell under the influence of the Soviet Union, Greece, like West Germany and Italy, attracted the strategic interest of western states due to its political and geographical characteristics. In particular, the British remained influential during and after the Greek Civil war, mainly in military matters but also in law enforcement. In order to preserve the morale and status of Greek law enforcement, the British-financed, trained and established the modern hierarchical system of Greek law enforcement (Kalyvas & Maratzidis, 2015).

6 The Period to the 1980s – And Further Re-Organization

For at least its first 15 years, the Greek urban police force had British officers holding the title of ‘Chief’ and seemed to function as a ‘branch’ of Scotland Yard. This may sound like an odd arrangement, however, the context was one in which although Greece was liberated from occupation, it was not yet a fully sovereign state. Political influences from abroad were frequent and significant. Characteristically, even Greek political parties bore names that directly connected them to the super-powers of the time (e.g. ‘FiloGermanikon komma’, meaning ‘pro-German party’). Furthermore, the London Metropolitan police were considered to be the ‘carrier’ of British virtues, such as decency and order, which were to be strengthened in the new nation. Stamatis (1971: 208) quotes a well-known philosopher of the time, Zachary Papantoniou, who wrote about the establishment of the urban police in Greece by the British, claiming that ‘whoever wonders why we have a foreign police force should consider the values that the British are bringing and that Greece is lacking: Cleanness, order and quietness. These are the three elements that cities need in order to be decent.’ Four decades later, in the period of the Colonel’s Junta between 1967 and 1974, a particular form of order was imposed – but other virtues of a civilised society were absent. The dictatorial regime created an authoritarian legal and political framework to support it and to facilitate the rule of the country, employing the police as the ‘long arm’ of the State (Stergioulis, 2001: 45).

After the fall of the Junta in 1974, the conservative party of New Democracy came to power and, although there had been concerns about the ideological orientation of some police officers and their allegiance to the Junta, most police officers were of a conservative orientation and posed no real threat to the newly elected conservative government. No major tensions or disputes arose between the government and police.

However, the arrival of a socialist government in 1981, and their unveiling of their modernization agenda, turned attention to the structure of policing in a way that could have given rise to considerable antagonism between government and police. That the project of modernization and merger did not produce such an outcome is in no small part due to the shrewd political choice of the architect of plans for change and the way in which he pursued his task.

6.1 The Plakias Report of 1982

A still relatively unknown police Major (now a retired General), George Plakias, was the architect of the vision for a unified national police force. The following draws upon his

1982 preliminary analysis of prospects for unification of the Greek police agencies. This report has not been published but provided the foundation for the subsequent merger.⁴

The role played by Plakias is not widely known, due to credit for the merger being given to the (then) Minister of Public Order (the late) Ioannis Skoularikis. However, the minister based his information on the analysis which Plakias had been commissioned to carry out. As such, the report represents an important primary historical document, the contents of which add important information regarding the aims, objectives and perceptions which informed the final details of the merger. Plakias’ (1982) study combines sociological analysis with a common sense approach and historical evidence, in order to provide support for the desired effort to unify the two police agencies.

Personal and political biases on the part of subsequent commentators and historians may mean Plakias’s role has been overlooked, although Plakias himself was not without his own biases. However, it is important to consider his contribution in order to gain an insight into the historical context of the merger.

The Plakias (1982) report presented a broad outline of the benefits of a national police force while also focusing on a number of issues. These ranged from the feasibility and viability of the merger, to questions such as: the appropriate official name for the new police agency; the need for, and suggestions as to the appearance of, new uniforms; the need for a new symbol to be used as a badge for the unified police force; and the new system of ranking.

Plakias’s (1982) study was addressed to the Minister of Public Order, a politician with a particular agenda. Therefore, even though it took the outward form of an objective study of police working conditions, it is natural that the report was written with this in mind. This bias was marked in various ways, for example Plakias (1982) frequently mentions the word ‘change’, which was the central motto of the Socialist

⁴ The first author interviewed General Plakias for his doctorate and obtained permission to draw on the report for purposes of research. Plakias was born in 1937 in Kalabaka, Greece, entering the Greek Gendarmerie in 1957 as a petty officer (the Gendarmerie being a quasi-military force). In 1960, he was admitted to the Gendarmerie’s officers’ academy, ranked top of his class and graduated in 1963 as a second lieutenant. He also trained at the Greek Polytechnic as a civil engineer. As a police officer, he carried out a number of studies, his major achievement being the report that laid the foundations for the 1984 merger of the two police agencies in Greece. He served in the police force for 26 years and was honourably discharged in 1986 as a Lieutenant General.

Party of the time and is therefore loaded with political connotations. Although he personally had an affiliation with the conservative party ('New Democracy'), Plakias (1982) emphasised the politically charged and current notion of 'change' as part of his argument for the necessity of reforms. The report aimed to convince the Minister and other government officials that his recommendations were progressive and hence could be adopted by a socialist government committed to (literally) re-forming the 'establishment'. Plakias (1982: 1) opened his report with the following summary of his intentions:

The success of an attempt is determined by the existing conditions [...] hence, in order to issue a verdict as to whether the merger could be implemented under present circumstances, we must compare the characteristics of the two agencies. Out of this comparison, we can conclude that, while the two forces share enough common traits to make their unification possible they also have quite a few differences that make such a merger difficult.

From the outset, therefore, Plakias (1982) presented the situation in a political manner, emphasising the necessity for a merger while simultaneously underlining the difficulties that emerge out of a social process that attempts to bridge conflicting mentalities. Plakias (1982) argued that the fundamental "source" of the difficulties associated with the merger were related to the very different nature of the two forces (the Gendarmerie as a military force and the Urban Police as a civilian force, albeit one with military discipline and structure) and concluded that, if the unification attempt were to have any success at all, it would have to include a "transitional" period of at least ten years.

This transition needed to cover what Plakias (1982) called 'founding principles', i.e., that the merger should not endanger any rights that the personnel of both agencies had enjoyed before the merger. He realised that conflicts of interest could be a serious impediment to the merger, and so such a provision sought to eliminate that danger. The culture inherent in the police forces was too important to ignore and it was important to mark a 'new beginning' by making police officers feel that they were part of a brand new force, rather than one that appeared to be 'new' while simply absorbing the 'old'. The issue of one police culture dominating the other needed to be avoided or else it would create serious problems in terms of solidarity and the effectiveness of policing (Harris, 2005).

Plakias (1982) stressed that the merger should not damage the attraction of a career in the police, or make the professionalization of policing more difficult, for example by altering promotion and hierarchical structures. An emphasis was placed on recognising that police officers were strongly committed to their work and were protective of their careers. He

also recommended that any merger should not burden police personnel financially (for example, due to the cost of buying new uniforms); this was an exception to the more general acknowledgement of the wish to keep costs to a minimum. As the merger was meant to be an organized state effort, any financial burden placed on police officers would see the state running the risk of appearing to make political changes at the expense of police officers, which would again undermine morale and confirm suspicions that the state did not care about the force. Reflecting this general suspicion of the state, he recommended that a law should be created to ensure equal treatment of all personnel following the merger. This demonstration of a desire for legal backing behind the reforms can be interpreted as a reflection of the weak nature of Greek democracy at the time, as the police and state both displayed a need for reassurances supported by law in the absence of any strong bond of trust. Again reflective of the fragile nature of relations between the new government and the police, Plakias (1982) warned that even if the total amount of personnel exceeded the needs of the new force, nobody should lose their job. In business, mergers inevitably bring with them the prospect of terminations of employment. In policing, however, it was believed that any hint that redundancies would occur would damage relations and lead to a loss of police support, with immediate implications for control over law and order. This tension between desired efficiency and a pragmatic concern to keep police officers on board with the changes was recognised from the beginning.

Plakias (1982) also stressed that the quality of services provided to citizens should not suffer but that they should demonstrably improve in order to gain public support and prolong the period of grace accorded the new police force. The 1984 merger, despite all other peripheral goals, had one main objective, that of improved policing. If that was not achieved, the merger would lose public support leading to the loss of any chance of implementing and sustaining a long term change in culture and performance.

The Report ranged across the breadth of police activity and organisation from strategy to the fine detail of embroidery on uniforms but always with the aim of harmonisation underpinning specific recommendations. For example, regarding the name of the new force, Plakias (1982) stressed that it should be different from the two existing names, in order to symbolise a new beginning, address the alienated public, and repair the damage caused by decades of repressive policing. As such, the name was to be indicative of the mission and nature of the new force, and its initials were not to be confused with the initials of other Government agencies or forces. Plakias (1982) thus proposed the name 'Hellenic Police' (Elliniki Astynomia in Greek), the name which was ultimately accepted by the government and is still used today. The term encapsulated the force's desire not to be limited by urban and

rural boundaries, a condition that had fostered friction and problematic policing in the past.

The badge of a police force is of substantial importance as it acts as a symbol of policing and of law and order. Furthermore, the public identifies police officers with it and there is also a subliminal message to the public that has to do with the style of policing. Plakias (1982) proposed the creation of a joint committee drawn from the two agencies to decide on a new emblem, and he also proposed having the historic date of the merger written on the badges worn by police officers, in order to further emphasise a shift from the past and marking out a new beginning. This particular proposal was, however, not adopted. Edwards (2005: 17) claims that the way the police are armed and dressed may have a significant effect on the way they are perceived by the public. The average police officer who 'walks the beat' represents the police as an institution in the eyes of the average citizen and the 'uniform' conveys a significant symbolic and real message (Joseph & Alex, 1972). In the original British police model, the police were seen as citizens in uniform: the uniform and their authority made them distinct but at the same time they were to continue to reflect the principal moral rules and beliefs of ordinary citizens and their communities (Reith, 1948: 24). In this spirit, Plakias (1982) viewed a change of uniforms as a symbolic act, reflecting the incorporation of both a new agency and a new mentality. This would enable the merged police force to escape the 'sins' of the past and appear to the public as a 'reborn' agency, 'dedicated to its mission and liberated from the unpleasant incidents, authoritarianism and abuse of power of (a few of) its members that have generated hate for the police' (Plakias, 1982: 8).

Plakias (1982) also argued that the new uniforms should be designed without the 'cord' that was a traditional part of police uniforms in Greece, indicating loyalty to the King. By removing this feature, the uniform would symbolise the dedication and loyalty of the police 'to the People'. The wearing of traditional and very formal uniforms was to be discontinued, with Plakias (1982: 11) observing that, 'Such pompous uniforms alienate police officers from the public; wearing such a 'peacock' type of uniform is an act of disrespect towards the public'. His choice of words here is important:

This uniform places police officers above and beyond the People, a condition that is not in accordance with modern Democratic views which mandate that Officers are both members of the public and servants of the Public (Plakias, 1982: 12).

The new police thus owe loyalty to no one except the people and that was to be made clear in the visual style of the uniform. Such details are important as the report displays

an awareness of elitism within the police which needed to be countered. By repeating the phrase "servants of the public" throughout the text, Plakias (1982) attempted to remind all officers of their principal mission, and to re-unite them with sections of the public who had become disenchanted with and alienated from Greek law enforcement.

Plakias (1982) believed that the ranks of the new police force should meet two key requirements: a) be compatible with the military nature of the new agency and b) to some extent, be different from the ranks of the pre-existing agencies. Since there was no other scale, a mixture of the ranks of the two agencies was proposed. In terms of the lower grade ('plain' police officer) he suggested a new name. Both agencies had names for the low ranking officers (Astyfylakas in the Urban Police and Horofylakas in the Gendarmerie), and these carried negative associations which the merger intended to change. Both names were also indicative of the geographical areas that the two agencies previously policed: Astyfylakas means 'guard of the City', while Horofylakas means 'guard of the periphery'. The new police force was to have national jurisdiction, hence the new title for officers should reflect this. However, the title 'Astyfylakas' prevailed and is the one currently used by the Hellenic Police. This was the name of the new national police force that was created under law number 1481, on October 1, 1984. In this respect, Plakias (1982) failed to convince the politicians of the advantages of a new, neutral title for the officers who would represent the police after the Merger.

This was not the only proposal that was rejected or modified. There were various objections to the principles and viability of the merger. In response, Plakias (1982) argued that the process would not be easy but that it would be manageable. Furthermore, he observed many of the problems had been magnified and blown out of proportion by those opposing the merger because of their own personal interests. Plakias (1982), indulging in a wordplay on the notion of "change" – which as stated above was the motto of the then newly-elected socialist government – claimed that his study introduced many innovations so that the change in Greek law enforcement would be not only articulated but also pioneering.

Plakias (1982) considered the merger to be inevitable and argued that new social conditions required it, the public demanded it and criminals would fear it. He closed his report by stating that all that was left to do was to take the political decision – an initiative that would then be considered one of the government's major political steps towards the fulfilment of its promise to the people, the promise of change.

7 Discussion

The merger represented a huge political endeavour involving the transformation of one of the most important as well as ambiguous and controversial institutions in Greece, namely a police force which had a notorious reputation and was blamed for most of the wrongdoings of the state. As a police officer himself (in Greece the rank of 'General' exists in the police as well as the Army), Plakias (1982) recognised the dangers of cultural conflicts involving the police. As police officers had strong affiliations with the pre-existing agencies, the merger had to happen in such a way that no agency would seem to be absorbing the other, in other words so that no one would 'lose face'. As the merger was meant to be an act symbolising a new era in policing, this new beginning needed to avoid unnecessary friction.

If internal conflict was to be avoided, so too was friction with the public. As Herbert (2006: 481) observes, 'the dilemma of legitimacy plagues no state institution more doggedly than the police' and Plakias saw accountability as the key to a new acceptance of the legitimacy of the police (Mazerolle et al., 2013). In contrast to American-style efforts to promote accountability in policing through judicial action, blue ribbon commissions, and law suits (Walker, 2005: 20-38), in Greece, all accountability mechanisms were concentrated in a system of strict political control. The notion was that the police had been made uncontrollable and corrupt by the Junta regime and that, if placed under the strict control of elected representatives, democratic practices would prevail and accountability to the people (the ultimate goal) would be achieved (Jackson et al., 2012). It was therefore important to eliminate any possibility that the police agencies could have their own agenda, something aimed for by the abolition of their headquarters and by making the Minister of Public Order their sole Chief.

The core reason behind the merger was the political control of the police. This is clear in the Plakias (1982: 12) report: 'This organisational scheme facilitates the immediate exercise of control by the political leadership on the police leadership, hence the domination of political will and decision'. This social and political reality led the newly elected socialist government to attempt a change that was considered at the time to be a 'breakthrough' of tremendous political importance: to merge the two pre-existing agencies and create a National Police force in an effort to alter the relationship between the state and society. Based on the notion that the police, under the conservative administration, acted without any sense of accountability and control, the socialists attempted to re-exert political control in order to restore balance.

8 Conclusion

The creation of one national police force aiming to help cultural memory forget the 'sins of the past' and create a more politically accountable system, was certainly a positive development. The democratisation of the police, the aim of eliminating bias, discrimination and exclusion from service based on ideology and political background, as well as the end of an approach to policing as the 'long arm of the state', were all steps in the right direction. However, the police today are still used by the politicians of Greece as figures of authority rather than as crime fighters. Each and every Minister of Public Order creates a mechanism for policy formation using personal consultants, disregarding the expertise of police agency personnel, yet simultaneously depending on the inadequate resources of the police to carry out their policies. This mixed picture should probably be unsurprising.

Bottoms and Tankebe (2012: 149) suggest that the 'complexity of and tensions between the functions of the police in a liberal-democratic society' mean 'no simple solutions exist for enhancing police legitimacy (Herbert, 2006: 500)'. According to Herbert (2006: 489-491), legitimacy can embrace three quite different requirements of policing and all three were reflected in the aspirations of the reform and merger process. First, appropriate and necessary subservience to the needs of the public within a democratic society; second, the need to establish a degree of separation in order to act on behalf of the democratically elected government to enforce rules and laws (even when not popular with a minority or even majority of the public), and to sustain police spirit, effectiveness and avoid fragmentation. Finally, legitimacy may also reflect an acknowledgement that 'the police sometimes need to go beyond a reactive stance and become proactive, taking the initiative in generating (or constructively promoting) appropriate kinds of local social order.' (Herbert, 2006: 489).

However, this is an ambitious programme. For all that Plakias (1982) got right in his analysis of the prospects for modernisation of the police, his hope that policing could rise above the game of political football, may have been over-optimistic. In some ways, policing in Greece is working hard to meet new standards and benchmarks such as those of the European Code of Police Ethics (Harris, 2005: 9) but at the same time, policing – like all social institutions – is affected by the external environment.

In contemporary Greece, this translates to a new world of financial austerity and cutbacks which foster some forms of deviance and crime, the enormous challenges of policing unprecedented migration flows and contested borders, as well as policing social unrest that has taken the form of violent riots.

In terms of crime rates, Greece has experienced a small increase in property and petty crime during the past 6 years of the fiscal crisis. For example, during the first year of the crisis, 'breaking and entering' in business facilities rose from 6,457 incidents in 2010 to 7,684 in 2011. 'Purse snatching' rose from 2,492 in 2010 to 2,992 in 2011 (Ministry of Citizen Protection, formerly Ministry of Public Order, n. d.). In fact, contrary to public perception, the intensity of the economic crisis (Greece lost more than 30% of its GDP in 5 years), did not produce a crime wave. This can be attributed to the admirable stability of key social institutions, family networks in particular.

However, although crime has not proved to be a major problem through the period of crisis, social unrest has been. During the first two years of the crisis, violent demonstrations – mainly in the downtown areas of Athens – increased significantly. There was a duplication of the "indignados" phenomenon of Spain in Athens, described as an expression of the feelings of the "outraged" (*aganaktismenoi*, in Greek.) This was a unique phenomenon with protestors camping in Athens main square (Syntagma) for weeks, demonstrating against the Government. These events were violent and posed many challenges to the police, especially due to the proximity to the Parliament. Violent demonstrations were met with equal violence by the police, which further increased public hostility against them and once again, recalling the days of the Junta, led to critics accusing them of acting as the "long arm of the State."

The opposition of the political left of the time – now the government – accused the police of being excessively violent and promised to dismantle the riot police. However, following the elections and in the face of continuing riots, the new government decided to retain the riot squad although it did dismantle a motor unit that patrolled the *Exarhia* area of Athens, (a locality associated with anarchists), which in turn led to an increase of violence in this area (PoliceNET Greece, 2015).

Overall, the effects of the financial crisis alongside the aspirations of the newly elected leftist government to limit police activity, led to problematic policing in the Athens region and a widespread perception that the city is experiencing an increase in lawlessness. Such a perception is undoubtedly also influenced by the challenges associated with the problem of massive illegal immigration to Greece, a phenomenon largely attributed to the civil war in Syria. For the past year, huge numbers of illegal migrants have reached the Greek islands of the Aegean Sea, mainly through Turkey and transported by boats run by smugglers. Greece, enforcing the Dublin treaty, rescued those immigrants who were stranded in Greece following the decision of FYROM to close the borders. It is estimated that 50,000 immigrants are currently in mainland

Greece and 7,000 in the islands (Iefimerida, 2016). The continuing impact of the financial crisis in Greece, meant that infrastructure was already under pressure and therefore not well equipped to accommodate such large migrant numbers. Subsequently many incidents of violence and disorder in the migrant camps led to further criticism of the police as either responsible for causing violence or ineffective in handling the disorder.

In police work, the need for modernisation, reform and innovation is a constantly 'unfinished' project and both historical and recent events in Greece illustrate this well.

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Policijska reforma in socialne spremembe v Grčiji: razvoj in združitev žandarmerije in urbanih policijskih sil

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Reforma grške policije iz leta 1984 je predstavljala razvoj policije v Grčiji v obliki združitve dveh zgodovinsko neodvisnih policijskih sil, ki sta predhodno dominirali v operacijah vzdrževanja reda v Grčiji – žandarmerije in urbane policije. Hkrati ta reforma ni prejela skoraj nobene znanstvene pozornosti. V prispevku sledi uvodu natančna zgodovinska analiza sledenja koreninam, iz katerih izhajajo funkcije in edinstvene značilnosti obeh policijskih sil do obdobja reforme in združitve v 1980-ih. Spreminjajoče se politične in družbene značilnosti obeh agencij so predstavljale odsev dozorevanja grškega naroda iz psevdodržave v moderno zahodno družbo. V prispevku opozarjamo na pomembnost spregledanega Plakiasovega poročila iz leta 1982 in opredeljujemo cilje ter ambicije zakona iz leta 1984, ki je sledil omenjenemu poročilu. V zaključku poudarjamo, da je združitev, kljub prizadevanju za spremembe v težki družbeno-politični situaciji takratnega obdobja, ustvarila temelje za odgovornejšo in bolj demokratično izvajanje policijske dejavnosti v Grčiji.

Ključne besede: policijska reforma, združitve, urbana in ruralna policija, zgodovina, odgovornost, Grčija

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