“States and Migration in Europe” Podcast
Episode #15 “The Diaspora and the State: The Greek Diaspora in Australia”
With Alexandra Dellios
Enhanced transcript

By Emmanuel Comte

Abstract: In this episode, we dive into the Greek community’s sway over Australian politics. This conversation with Dr Alexandra Dellios – from the Australian National University – sheds light on how diaspora communities can influence policymaking in their host countries. We uncover the historical and socio-economic motives that propelled Greeks towards Australia post-World War II and the political landscape that awaited them. Through Alexandra’s expert lens, we explore the dynamics that allowed the Greek community to cement itself as a political force in Melbourne. This episode is a must-listen for anyone interested in migration studies, diaspora politics, and the intricate interactions between immigrants and their adopted homelands. Through personal stories, political analysis, and expert insights, we paint a vivid picture of how diasporas and the state profoundly shape each other.

Introduction

Emmanuel Comte: Welcome to a new episode of the podcast series "States and Migration in Europe." Today, we'll explore the dynamism of diaspora communities and their influence on international relations and national identities. We analyse an influential diaspora that has significantly impacted the public narrative in Australia: the Greek diaspora. We are joined by Dr Alexandra Dellios, a researcher from the Australian National University, who has devoted her academic career to examining the interplay between migration and politics, with a particular emphasis on the Greek community in Australia. Alexandra's work highlights how diaspora communities can wield considerable political influence, shaping policies and contributing significantly to political discourse. In this episode, we will delve into the journey of the Greek diaspora in Australia, discussing their reasons for migration, the political conditions they encountered, and their evolution into a formidable force in Australian politics. We'll also discuss their objectives, and achievements, and broaden our discussion to include other diasporas and their political influence, such as the Jewish diaspora. Our conversation will also cover the growing demand for expertise in diaspora politics in an increasingly interconnected world with rising foreign communities in various countries. Stay with us as we unravel these themes. So, Alexandra, how did you come to study migration politics and the role of diaspora?

Background and Research Motivation

Alexandra Dellios: That's a great question. My personal life is closely intertwined with the history of the diaspora and post-war immigration. Both of my parents were migrants from Greece in the post-war era, eventually settling in Australia. Questions of cultural identity, belonging, integration, and the meaning of multiculturalism have always been prominent in my life. In studying Australian history, I noticed that it's often an afterthought at the university level. Australian history is primarily taught from the perspective of British colonisation and settlement, with the post-war immigration boom and the introduction of diversity and multiculturalism only touched upon at the end. This approach is much more complicated than it appears. I've always been interested in challenging some of our assumptions about diversity,

colonisation, the distinction between settlers and migrants, and our responsibilities in a colonial state like Australia.

Emmanuel Comte: So, your interest stemmed from your family background and a desire to challenge the dominant national narrative?

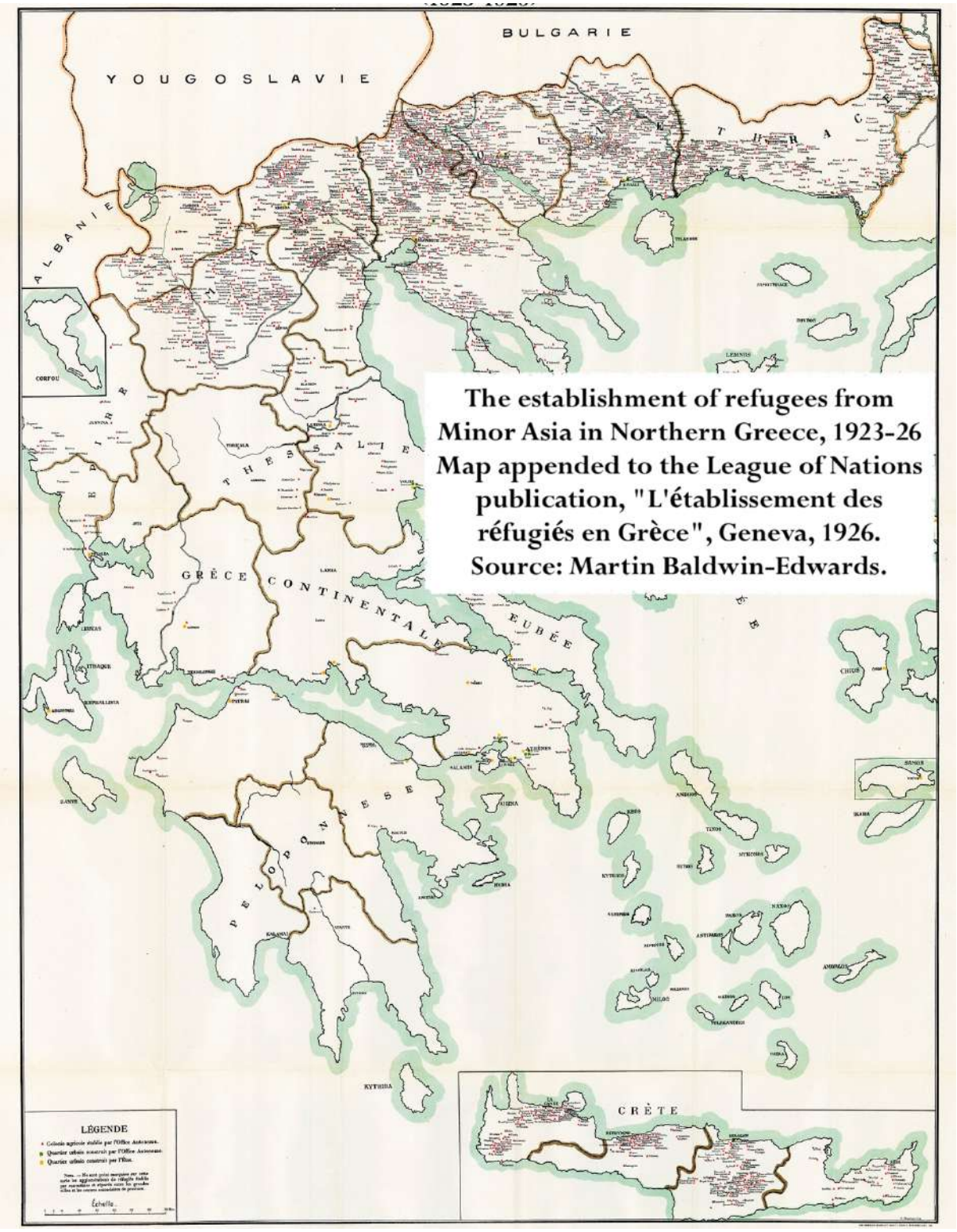
Alexandra Dellios: Yes, much of my work focuses on diversifying and critically examining celebratory narratives about immigration, which are often limited to the contributions of a core Anglo-Celtic culture. I aim to explore how migrants, as individual agents, operate within the prevailing structures of Australian society. From a personal viewpoint, my parents and grandparents migrated to Australia as unskilled labourers, like many Southern European migrants at that time. They faced structural barriers, and I wanted to explore what this meant for their decision to stay, settle, and integrate into the body politic, and its implications for subsequent generations. We now refer to such individuals as hyphenated Australians. My interest lies in understanding what it means to be, for example, Greek-Australian.

Emmanuel Comte: And do you believe that today's dominant narrative about Australia's history is still predominantly based on this Anglo-Celtic identity?

Alexandra Dellios: That's an interesting question. While we often praise ourselves for being a successful multicultural nation, if we examine the structures that support multicultural nationhood, it's evident that they are still overwhelmingly Anglo-Celtic. Australia remains predominantly monolingual, and most of our major institutions are controlled by individuals of Anglo-Celtic descent. It often seems that those considered ethnic are anyone other than Anglo-Australians, which shows an orbit around what is essentially a core Anglo-Saxon culture.

Why Did Greeks Move to Australia?

Emmanuel Comte: Let's discuss the Greek immigration to Australia. Initially, Australia was settled by the British, with specific policies favouring immigrants from England and the rest of the British Isles. However, after World War II, new waves of immigrants, including Greeks, began arriving in Australia. The question arises: why did Greeks move to Australia? I heard that many Greek immigrants in Australia were those displaced in the early 1920s, repatriated from mainland Asia to northern Greece. These individuals were quite mobile and, unable to find stability in Greece, eventually sought opportunities elsewhere.



The establishment of refugees from Minor Asia in Northern Greece, 1923-26 Map appended to the League of Nations publication, "L'établissement des réfugiés en Grèce", Geneva, 1926. Source: Martin Baldwin-Edwards.

Alexandra Dellios: Regarding the literature and evidence of Asian Greeks being more mobile than other Greek diaspora groups, it's an intriguing point. My father is a descendant of Minor Asian refugees. After 1922, they faced challenges integrating into the Greek nation-state. A significant proportion of Greeks who migrated to Melbourne were from northern Greece, and among them were descendants of refugees from Asia Minor. So, there might be some validity to that observation. There were various push and pull factors for Greek migration to Australia, predominantly economic. They arrived as economic migrants, influenced by Australia's post-

war mass industrialisation and the need for unskilled labour. In 1951, Australia signed an agreement with the Greek government through the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, facilitating the influx of Greek migrants. Many of these migrants came from impoverished rural areas, seeking to transform their lives. It's noteworthy that not all Greek migrants intended to permanently settle in Australia. As economic migrants, many planned to earn money and eventually return to Greece with profits, which some did. My family's story reflects this trend. On my mother's side, my grandfather worked as a guest worker in Germany during the 1950s and 60s before deciding to migrate to Australia. Economic opportunity was a significant factor in their migration.

Emmanuel Comte: It's interesting and aligns with the earlier relocation of populations during the 1920s. The populations transferred under the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 suffered significant economic losses. They lost capital and were inadequately compensated by properties taken from Muslims relocated to the new Turkey. The disparity between these two population flows led to many losing their holdings. Consequently, they faced challenging conditions, making them highly mobile. But let's continue discussing the Greeks who moved to Australia. What were the political conditions in Australia at that time? How were they welcomed, and what processes affected them?

Political Conditions in Australia

Alexandra Dellios: The short answer is that there were few policies, structures, and services in place to receive and settle new migrants from outside the British Isles. Migrants from the UK and Ireland were always prioritised. The policy from the Department of Immigration emphasised that for every non-British migrant, there would be ten from Britain. However, this was not feasible due to the actual number of migrants arriving. New arrivals were expected to assimilate into Australian society, abandoning their previous political and ethnic identities. They were encouraged to become ‘new Australians’ and integrate seamlessly without the need for substantial investments in social services and welfare. This approach was not entirely successful. For instance, Greek communities and other groups within the diaspora formed their own societies and fraternities, maintaining strong regional ties.

Emmanuel Comte: I have a question about that. It seems counterintuitive. Given the intention for migrants to assimilate, I would have expected more specialised services to support this process, rather than simply expecting them not to maintain their cultures and languages.

Alexandra Dellios: That's an interesting point. The policy of assimilation was paradoxical as it lacked targeted investments. There were some English language training programmes, but they weren't mandatory or well-enforced. Essentially, the government's stance was to minimise investment in special services for new migrants. This approach was underpinned by the belief that institutional structures in Australia should not need to adapt to accommodate these migrants. In hindsight, this perspective seems impractical, considering the significant number of migrants arriving. The Department of Immigration, established in 1947, expanded rapidly in the late 1940s and 1950s. The Good Neighbour Council, run by well-intentioned Britons, aimed to indoctrinate new Australians into an Australian way of life, which was vaguely defined beyond aligning with British civic values. Consequently, there were minimal targeted welfare programmes for non-English-speaking migrants.

Emmanuel Comte: So, what was the expectation regarding how these migrants would assimilate into the dominant Australian culture in terms of habits and language?

Alexandra Dellios: The government seemed to accept that the first generation of migrants might face difficulties assimilating. They were primarily channelled into factory work and unskilled labour. The expectation was that their children would become fully Australian, primarily through the education system. These children were expected to refrain from speaking their ethnic languages in public and integrate seamlessly into mainstream society.

Emmanuel Comte: So, the expectation was that they would assimilate into the standard Australian culture after one generation. Meanwhile, the differences in the migrant communities were tolerated, with the anticipation that their children would not continue these cultural traditions.

Alexandra Dellios: Exactly. The overarching goal was a culturally unified country, achieved without significant investment in supporting these new cultural groups. Understanding Australia's historical context is crucial. About 95 percent of the population had British heritage. Before World War II, the primary ethnic divide in Australia was between English and Irish settlers.

Emmanuel Comte: Regarding assimilation in Australia, does this encompass language, religion, political views, or other aspects?

Alexandra Dellios: Discussing Australia in terms of religion is complex. While institutions like the Catholic Church hold considerable influence, religion has not significantly shaped the Australian national identity. For instance, Greeks were free to establish Orthodox churches in the 19th century. Religion, therefore, hasn't been a central element in defining what it means to be Australian.

Emmanuel Comte: So, there was an expectation in Australia to avoid replicating the church-state connections prevalent in Greece.

Alexandra Dellios: Yes, that's an accurate observation.

Emmanuel Comte: At that time, was Australia predominantly Protestant?

Alexandra Dellios: Indeed, Australia was primarily Protestant, although there was a significant Catholic minority, largely due to Irish and later Italian immigrants. However, most of our leaders were Protestant.

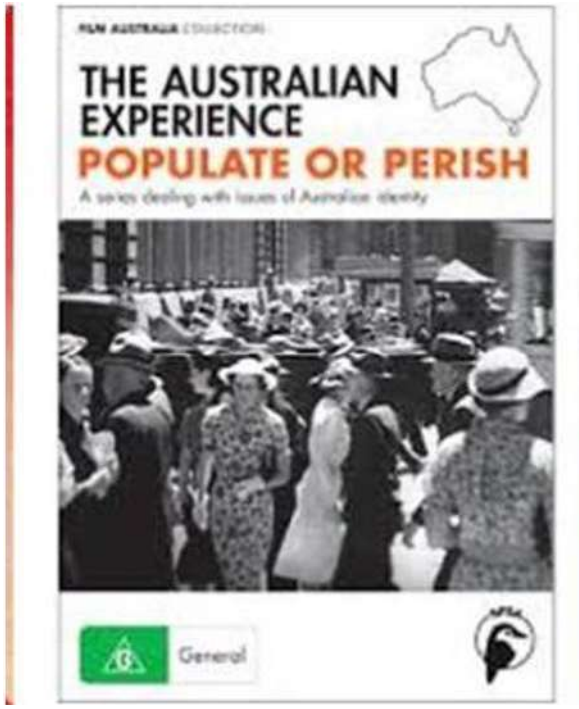
Emmanuel Comte: Did assimilation also extend to specific political or foreign policy views?

Alexandra Dellios: Certainly. Post-World War II, Australia's foreign policy leaned towards the U.S. and the U.K. under concerns about our geographic location and proximity to Asia. Immigrants from outside the British Isles were expected to abandon much of their political beliefs. During the Cold War, immigrants were scrutinised, particularly those with left-wing or communist sympathies, despite the Communist Party of Australia being legal.

Emmanuel Comte: So, there was a concern about potential communist views among Greek immigrants, especially considering the political situation in Greece after the Greek Civil War.

Alexandra Dellios: Indeed, Greek migrants active in left-wing politics faced intense scrutiny from Australian security and intelligence agencies until 1975. Their citizenship applications were often denied due to their affiliations with the Communist Party of Australia.

Emmanuel Comte: This brings us to the final aspect of the political conditions encountered by Greeks upon their arrival in Australia. Notably, Australia established the Department of Immigration in 1947, primarily due to fears of a Japanese invasion during World War II. They recognised that Australia, with its sparse population, would struggle to defend itself in the event of a large-scale invasion from an Asian power. Thus, they realised the necessity of diversifying their sources of immigration beyond the UK to achieve a critical demographic mass. This would bolster their defensive capabilities in the event of potential invasions, not just from Japan, but possibly from other Asian nations, such as China, although perhaps not immediately in 1947, but shortly thereafter. So, am I correct in understanding that the Australian government was open to immigrants from Southern Europe, viewing them as a potential contribution to a more populous Australia, while avoiding migrants who might pose a liability in a major conflict?



Alexandra Dellios: Yes, historically, Australia has maintained stringent immigration screening processes, notably under the White Australia policy. However, the demographic need for mass immigration, primarily driven by defence strategies against possible Japanese invasion during World War II, quickly shifted. This need for defence soon gave way to the demands for unskilled labour and industrialisation. The necessity to boost the population was closely tied to an economic mission. Considering the government's close ties with industry, manufacturing, and trade unions, there was a balancing act regarding which migrants were acceptable. Initially, the focus was on racially suitable British settlers. However, as the need for a larger population grew, the criteria expanded to include Northern Europeans. However, due to their reluctance to migrate to Australia at that time, the category further broadened to Eastern and Southern European migrants. These groups were also subjected to political screening to ensure they were deemed appropriate settlers.

Emmanuel Comte: Do you believe this political screening significantly influenced the composition of immigration? In other words, in the absence of such screening, might we have seen increased immigration from Indonesia or other Southeast Asian countries?

Alexandra Dellios: I believe it was closely tied to the overall racial selectivity of Australia's immigration policy.

Emmanuel Comte: So, it did have an impact on the inflows.

Alexandra Dellios: Yes, definitely.

Emmanuel Comte: It's interesting to note that Europeans managed to migrate to Australia despite the greater distance. This was partly due to international organisations financing the transfer of Southern Europeans. What is now the International Organisation for Migration was initially heavily subsidised by the United States to fund the journeys of migrants from Southern Europe to countries like Australia. This implies that European migrants had access to resources

that facilitated their relocation to Australia, resources that might not have been available to Asian migrants.

Alexandra Dellios: The period we're examining was quite controversial. Australia staunchly upheld its White Australia policy until the mid-1960s, with immigration ministers defending the nation's right to exclude, broadly speaking, non-European migrants. This policy included severe restrictions. For instance, in the late 1940s, there were specific caps on Jewish immigration, indicative of a strong undercurrent of anti-Semitism. Caps were also placed on Polish immigration at one point. Australia has historically been racially selective in its immigration policies. Regarding Asia, Australian anxieties were often linked to a perceived threat from the north, as described in various source materials. Australia, at that time, viewed itself as an isolated British outpost, focusing on 'stemming the tide' of Asian immigration. It wasn't until the mid to late 1960s that some of the stringent stipulations of the White Australia policy began to relax, allowing Asian students from the Philippines and other parts of Southeast Asia to study in Australia. However, these students were not necessarily encouraged to settle and take up citizenship, as they had different rights compared to European migrants. In essence, these policies were about controlling the demographics of the Australian population.

Emmanuel Comte: I understand. So, these policies were somewhat effective until, as you mentioned, the late 1960s or 1970s. I believe that from the 1970s onwards, migration from Asia likely increased due to regional development. There was a policy shift, accompanied by a stronger push from migrants, which increased the policy's cost. But let's return to our Greek migrants in Australia. It seems they did not conform to expectations of seamlessly integrating into an Anglo-Saxon country. They appear to have also wielded more influence than anticipated.

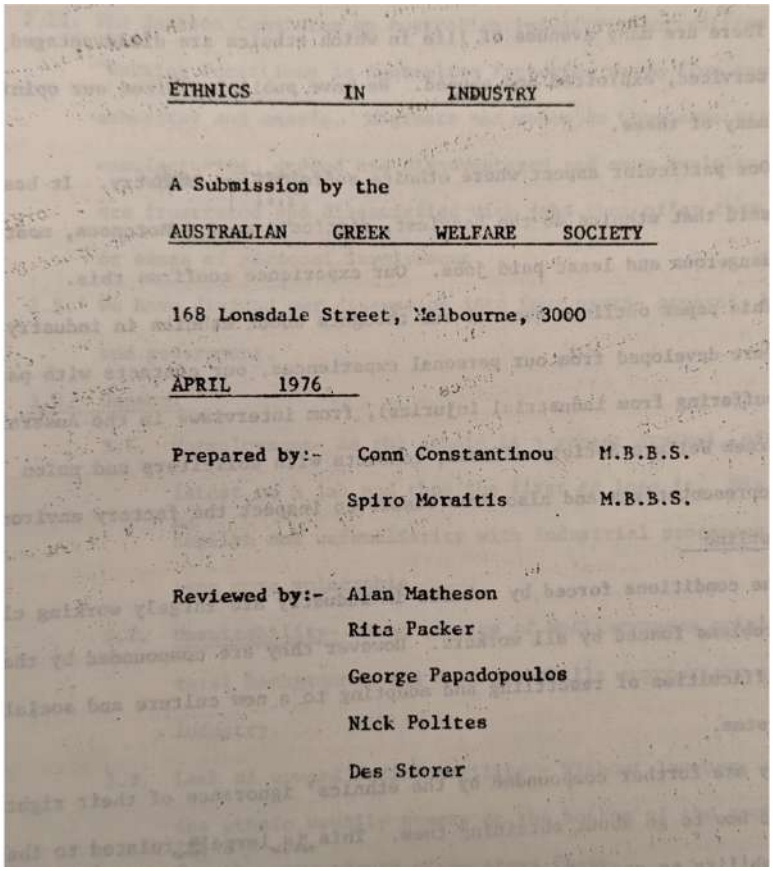
Organisational Dynamics of the Greek Diaspora in Australia

Alexandra Dellios: Intriguingly, the significant number of immigrants encouraged to take up citizenship were not initially expected to have substantial voting power. It took the Australian establishment a considerable amount of time to recognise the influence of the ethnic vote. From a historian's perspective, this is quite remarkable. My research focuses on the subset of left-wing migrants who, throughout the 1970s, made demands on government structures and systems, eventually impacting settlement services. While it may now seem cliché to discuss the ethnic voice or ethnic lobbying, particularly among Southern European migrant groups, this influence started at the grassroots level. These communities, initially isolated, needed to support each other in terms of housing and employment. As Southern and Eastern Europeans became a significant part of the industrial working class, their demands extended to trade unions and government structures.

Emmanuel Comte: How did they expand their influence in the Australian political system? You mentioned the ethnic vote, which arose from their large numbers and their taking up of Australian citizenship, evolving into political demands for specific policies. This group also did not assimilate to the extent that their preferences aligned with those of the Anglo-Saxon population, leading to the emergence of the ethnic vote. Was there another influential factor besides voting?

Alexandra Dellios: In terms of their power within trade unions, this was growing throughout the 1960s and '70s. We must consider the context of the post-war era and the significant power trade unions held then, which differs from their influence today. Regarding Australia's reliance

on manufacturing during that period and the impact of the Greek diaspora, it's important to also consider the influence of an Australian-educated generation emerging in the 1970s. These individuals, educated in Australian universities, were rising as professionals in fields such as law, medicine, and welfare work. Many of these key individuals played a role in forming societies that made demands to the government, particularly in terms of reforming legal systems. They demanded changes in social welfare, focusing on translation and interpretation services, and also called for reforms in healthcare.



ETHNICS IN INDUSTRY

A Submission by the

AUSTRALIAN GREEK WELFARE SOCIETY

168 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, 3000

APRIL 1976

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Emmanuel Comte: It seems to me that we witnessed the emergence of an alliance between these groups and the government. They sought the government's intervention to address various problems. Their requests included social services, translation services, and broader adaptation measures. These groups became proponents of increased state intervention to better integrate themselves into society. Earlier in our conversation, you mentioned the growing bureaucracy following the creation of the Department of Immigration in 1947. This indicates that the government and its bureaucracy understood their role in accommodating these people in Australian society. Initially, there was an expectation of assimilation, which did not occur as anticipated. To address this mismatched expectation, an alliance was formed between these groups and the government to expand social services in their favour. This expansion was supported by government bureaucracies as it allowed them to grow and provide more services. The Greek community favoured this as well, as it enabled them to channel resources and adapt better.

Alexandra Dellios: What they were essentially demanding were deeper structural changes in how governments accommodate diversity. The expanding bureaucracy in the Department of Immigration was initially focused on the first two years of settlement. It did not acknowledge that Australia's demographics had drastically changed, necessitating a redefinition of what it

meant to be a British society. What migrant rights activists in the Greek Diaspora argued for was a complete renegotiation of the state's role and how it should serve its people. In terms of welfare services, this meant recognising ethnicity not as a temporary condition that a community would naturally outgrow after the first generation of settlement but as something that could be integrated into society.

Emmanuel Comte: Did these efforts give the government a mandate to create a multicultural society?

Alexandra Dellios: There are arguments that this grassroots demand spurred the government to adopt a more multicultural framework for settlement services and to implement new access and equity frameworks.

Emmanuel Comte: Were Greeks, including the second generation, able to effectively infiltrate the political system in the capital and advocate for their interests?

Alexandra Dellios: In the 1970s, there was a marked influence at the local municipal level, especially in Melbourne's northern suburbs. In these areas, Greek-speaking migrants comprised 20 to 30% of the population. Despite this significant presence, however, many were not voting in local elections. This could be attributed to a lack of proper information, a feeling of inability to participate, or the candidates not representing their interests. This situation began to change gradually after the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Today, local and state politics are more representative of these communities. However, I cannot say the same for federal politics. There's greater participation in politics at the local level, but there are still many challenges related to the structures supporting multiculturalism and inclusion in the political process.

Emmanuel Comte: Are there prominent politicians of Greek origin in Australia who have reached high positions and advocate for state intervention to promote migrant rights?

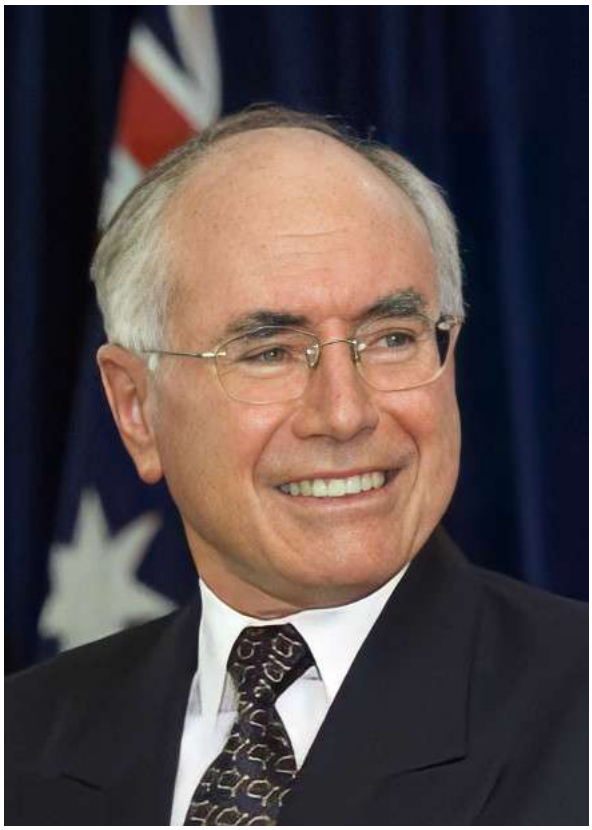
Alexandra Dellios: Greek Australians have achieved significant representation in politics. Whether they use their platform to advocate for structures supporting both new and older migrant groups is another matter, but they are represented at all levels of Australian politics. This is also true for Italian and other Eastern European migrant communities, though less so for non-European Australians. Greek communities, especially in Victoria, wield considerable lobbying power, and politicians from both the Labour and Liberal parties recognise the strength of the Greek community.

Emmanuel Comte: Do they advocate for proactive policies favouring Greek immigrants or other immigrant groups?

Alexandra Dellios: The needs of the Greek community have evolved. In the 1970s and 80s, they were a more disadvantaged, working-class group. From the 1990s onwards, they moved towards being a middle-class lobbying group with some social mobility. Whether Greek Australians feel a responsibility to continue advocating for multicultural services for newer or disadvantaged ethnic minority groups is now a different issue.

Emmanuel Comte: Was there any backlash in Australian politics against foreigners, potentially due to the costs of the multicultural society?

Alexandra Dellios: Yes, especially in the 1980s, there were public debates about the efficacy of multiculturalism. Some conservative politicians and historians argued that multiculturalism had failed in Australia, claiming it was progressing too quickly and too far. Their concerns were primarily about the rate of Asian immigration. However, in the 1990s, under John Howard, who was not a proponent of multiculturalism, there was a rhetorical shift. Howard managed to separate pride in multicultural Australia from immigration policies. This created an irony in Australian politics, where we embrace the idea of being a successful, harmonious, multicultural nation while simultaneously demonizing asylum seekers arriving by boat. The political establishment and voters often support multiculturalism while advocating for strict policies against asylum seekers and refugees.



Emmanuel Comte: Perhaps this is driven by a fear of higher costs associated with migrants.

Alexandra Dellios: It is quite easy to demonise the burden of refugee and asylum seeker costs to the state, a phenomenon observed in the UK as well. In Australian terms, we've never received many asylum seekers or refugees, and they have never been a significant burden on the state in terms of welfare. In fact, Australia needs these migrants to contribute economically and to fill significant skill gaps in care services. Therefore, the perceived economic burden of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as other assisted migrants, is not supported by the data.

Comparison with Other Diasporas

Emmanuel Comte: This was the journey of Greek migrants to Australia, who came for both economic and political reasons. They played an influential role in the political system, particularly with their voting power, and challenged the initial expectation that they would simply assimilate. There was an alliance between the government and these groups to promote a multicultural society, but this faced backlash in Australian politics, particularly regarding the

inclusion of new migrants. These debates are similar to those in Europe, where the state grapples with the extent of immigrant integration and the expectation of immediate assimilation. This case highlights the inconsistencies in policies related to both total assimilation and multiculturalism, as neither has unfolded as planned. However, let's consider the specific case of the Jewish diaspora, which wielded significant political influence, notably in the 20th century's major powers, like the UK and the US. Do you think the Greek diaspora in Australia could have a similar influence on Australian foreign policy?

Alexandra Dellios: The situation with the Greek diaspora in Australia differs significantly. Their influence on the relationship between Australia and Greece, and on foreign policy more generally, is not as heated or politicised. The stakes are not as high. In contrast, the Israeli lobby has an obvious influence on Australian politics. This is evident in the current war in Gaza, with the politicians' responses and Australia's arms sales to Israel. However, it's crucial to differentiate between various waves of the Jewish diaspora in Australia, which are diverse and not uniformly aligned with Israeli state Zionism. While the Greek diaspora may not have a substantial influence on the broader foreign policy objectives of the Australian government, they do possess some lobbying power, particularly in domestic politics.

Emmanuel Comte: Yes, their influence seems more pronounced in domestic politics.

Alexandra Dellios: Indeed. For instance, the lengthy negotiations around reciprocal pensions between the Greek and Australian governments involved significant efforts from the Greek diaspora. Additionally, in the 1970s and 80s, they played a major role in compensation cases. Furthermore, the communist migrants I mentioned earlier, who were denied citizenship, actively lobbied the Australian government in the sixties regarding democratic issues in Greece. They protested against Greek ships docking in Australian ports and called for boycotts. Although they didn't significantly influence Australian foreign policy, they were actively engaged in protests related to Australia's relations with the Greek nation-state.

Emmanuel Comte: I understand that the key distinction with Jewish diaspora advocacy is its lesser focus on geopolitical actions, particularly in comparison to countries like the UK or the US. But Australia, by contrast, is not as proactive in the international system.

Alexandra Dellios: Indeed, Australia is a middling power. Nonetheless, our contribution to the troubling situation in Gaza compels us to discuss these issues.

Emmanuel Comte: Would you say there are different types of diasporas? For instance, geopolitical diasporas significantly influence foreign policy, while other diasporas are more focused on domestic politics, lobbying the government for social services, preferential treatment, and support in building a multicultural society. Can we draw parallels here?

Alexandra Dellios: Yes, that's an interesting perspective. Scholars have indeed attempted to classify diasporas. For example, some differentiate between elite diasporas with access to funding and capital and working-class diasporas without such access. This isn't to say that one group can't evolve into the other. Consider the Chinese diaspora in Australia; many are permanent settlers with varied access to citizenship. This raises questions about their civic engagement capabilities, especially for those who can't vote. We're living in a more mobile world, and these are pertinent questions, like how to raise a family transnationally in Australia without citizenship.

Emmanuel Comte: Do you think the Chinese diaspora is more focused on influencing domestic rather than foreign policy?

Alexandra Dellios: I haven't conducted sufficient research to conclude that.

Emmanuel Comte: This aligns with our earlier discussion that Australia, unlike the US, does not exert significant geopolitical influence. The influence of a diaspora in a country correlates with that country's role as a major international actor. The more a government intervenes in international affairs, the more opportunities arise to leverage that government. Since Australia is more of a middle power and less involved in international debates, there is less scope for diasporas to influence geopolitical matters, unlike in the US.

Alexandra Dellios: In many ways, we consider our alliances carefully. Historically, we've aligned with powers like the UK or the US, who have acted as protectors in our region. However, our current economic landscape is largely dependent on China, considering most of our exports are directed there. This economic dependence, coupled with the strained relations between previous Australian governments and the Chinese government, places us in a challenging position. We are aware of the need to align with US foreign policy, but this creates a complex situation. However, I'm not a foreign policy expert, so my insights are limited in this regard.

Emmanuel Comte: So, would you say it's the structure of Australia's exports, rather than immigration patterns, that primarily contribute to Australia becoming an increasingly reluctant member of the Five Eyes alliance?

Alexandra Dellios: In my opinion, there's insufficient discussion about the implications of having a resident population that does not pursue citizenship. This group enjoys different rights within the nation-state but maintains ties to countries like China. This situation has political ramifications that we haven't fully addressed. Since the 1990s, we've seen a substantial growth in the diaspora population, a political phenomenon that we haven't yet fully comprehended.

Demand for Expertise and Research Response

Emmanuel Comte: Do you perceive a growing demand for expertise in diaspora politics? For example, are governments or national companies from emigration countries showing interest in understanding how diaspora politics operate and how they can leverage diaspora influence?

Alexandra Dellios: As a historian specialising in diaspora studies, I believe there is a demand for such expertise. Periodically, countries like Greece show interest in harnessing the cultural and economic power of their diaspora. There's a need to explore the concepts of belonging and identity within the diaspora, considering the increasing global mobility. Both cultural and historical implications for individuals and collective members of the diaspora warrant deeper examination.

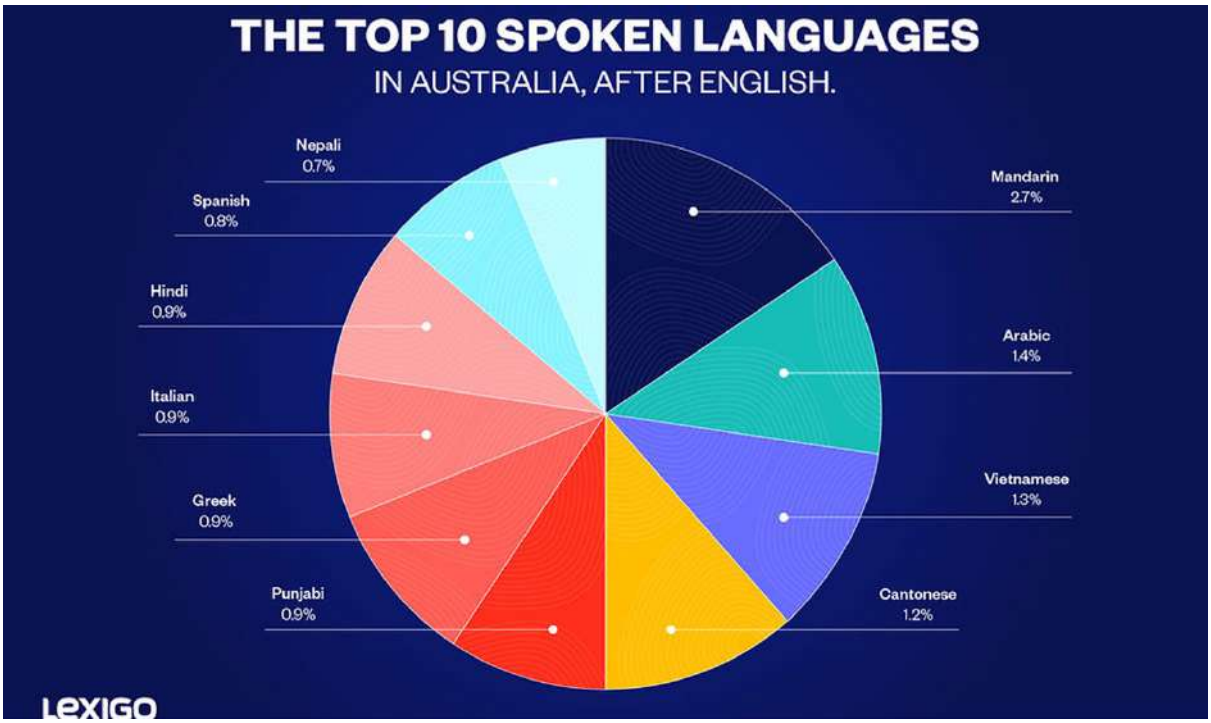
Emmanuel Comte: Is this demand primarily from governments or private entities?

Alexandra Dellios: It should come from both sectors.

Emmanuel Comte: For example, private entities, like major shipowners, might want to leverage the Greek diaspora's influence in places like Melbourne for preferential treatment. Similarly,

in international relations, the Greek government could use the influence of its diaspora to sway Australia's stance on issues involving Turkey.

Alexandra Dellios: Certainly. According to the last census, there are over 400,000 Australians who claim Greek ancestry. It's a significant demographic that cannot be overlooked.



Conclusion

Emmanuel Comte: This discussion highlights the complexity and interconnectivity of our world, especially in terms of power dynamics and their impact on communities. It seems to me that these dynamics are directly proportional to the development of government in a particular country. That's an aspect to consider in terms of democracy because certain forces can leverage power to their advantage within a country, thereby influencing the direction of government policies. This is evident when we compare countries like Australia and the U.S. in terms of foreign policies. The more expanded a government is, the more likely it is that various lobbying groups will exert influence and benefit from these policies. Would you like to conclude on that?

Alexandra Dellios: My research is quite localised, particularly within the Greek diaspora in Melbourne. I'm less focused on the transnational diaspora lobbying power you're discussing. The European concern about the growing influence of some diaspora groups doesn't translate as significantly into the Australian context.

Emmanuel Comte: Thank you very much, Alexandra. Could you share with our listeners where they can follow your work?

Alexandra Dellios: Sure, I'm on Twitter as @AlecaDell. I also have a blog that's linked there. Alternatively, you can find me at the Australian National University.

Emmanuel Comte: Okay, thank you very much, Alexandra, for your insights.