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Greece:

Immigration towards Greece at the Eve of the 21st Century. A Critical Assessment.

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1. Introduction

Emigration trends from Greece started diminishing in the mid-1970s. In fact, the National Statistical Service of Greece stopped collecting data on emigration from Greece in 1977 (National Statistical Service of Greece and Lianos, 2003). As you can see in Table 1, net migration started showing positive numbers in the 1970s but, until the beginning of the 1990s, the main influx was that of return migrants.

Table 1.1: Net Migration in Greece during the post-war period

Period	Greek Citizens	Net Migration Foreign Citizens	Total
1951-1960	-224.450	24.165	-200.285
1961-1970	-406.169	37.832	-368.337
1971-1980	164.552	78.856	243.408
1981-1990	251.190	-4.148	247.042
1991-2000	52.746	629.817	682.563

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, cit. in *Kathimerini*, English edition, 18-19 January 2003, available at http://www.migrantsingreece.org/files/STAT_8.bmp, accessed on 3/9/2007.

However, immigration to Greece is not as a recent phenomenon as many people might think. For example, migrants from Pakistan appeared for the first time in the Greek labour market, after a bilateral agreement was struck between Greece and Pakistan during the 1970s (Tonchev, 2007). Nevertheless, at the end of the 1980s and mostly in the beginning of the 1990s, the size of the migratory influx in Greece grew exponentially and rather unexpectedly. Most of the migrants came from neighbouring countries such as Albania and Bulgaria, but the number of co-ethnic returnees from countries of the former Soviet Union was also considerable. Consequently, the migratory movements towards Greece can be linked, to a large extent, to the collapse of the Socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Balkan Peninsula.

Greece did not have a legal framework to control and manage migratory inflows until the beginning of the 1990s. The first law attempting to regulate such matters was voted on in 1991 and focused mostly on stricter controls at border areas while making the legal entrance and settlement of foreigners who aimed to work in Greece nearly impossible. Despite the severity of the Greek migration law – which among other things prohibited any contact between undocumented aliens and public services – the influx continued. The large number of undocumented migrants residing and working in the country (estimated at half a million in the mid-1990s already) led to the first legalisation program, which was voted on in 1997 and implemented in 1998. More than 370,000 people participated in the first phase of the regularisation programme of 1998.

The first comprehensive migration law was voted on in 2001 with two main aims; a mid-term management of the phenomenon (including border control, issue and renewal of stay and work permits, as well as matters of naturalization of foreign residents) and implementing a new regularisation programme. Another 360,000 people applied to legalise their status during this programme. In 2005, a new law was passed in Parliament which simplified the issue and renewal of stay permits (work permits were abolished) and

introduced a third, albeit significantly smaller, regularisation programme (with approximately 200,000 applicants). The new law provided for the incorporation of the European directives on family reunification and the status of long-term residents into the national legislation. Finally, since the previous law still suffered from important shortcomings related to the overall processing of applications for new entries or for the renewal of expiring permits, an amendment to this law was passed in February 2007, with an aim to simplify procedures.

This paper discusses critically the evolution of the migration phenomenon in Greece during the past 15 years, paying special attention to the policies and practices of managing legal and irregular migration and their outcomes. In the first part of the paper we discuss when and how the transition from an emigration to an immigration country took place in Greece (section 1). We present data on and estimates of the size and type of stocks and flows and provide for an overview of migrants' insertion into the Greek labour market (sections 2 and 3). In the second part, we concentrate on the evolution of migration policy in Greece to this day. We first provide an overview and critical appraisal of past and current migration laws (section 4). We then concentrate on three important aspects of migration policy: first, the design and enforcement of migration control measures (section 5). We distinguish between controls at the borders and internal controls. Second, the management of migration through regularisation programmes and through the issuing and renewal of stay and work permits (section 6). Here we discuss how temporary regularisation programmes and standard permit issuing/renewal practices contribute to controlling rather than managing migration in Greece. In the last section (section 7) we discuss current immigrant integration policies, looking at specific areas such as education, housing, anti-discrimination and naturalization policy and practice.

The first part of the paper reviews new data collected in the course of our fieldwork during the fall and winter of 2007, as well as secondary sources (earlier studies). The second part of the report builds mainly on the fieldwork conducted during the spring and fall of 2007 and winter 2007-2008 by the IDEA Greek team. We have conducted 12 interviews with 15 policy makers¹ (three interviews were with two people at a time) in the Ministries of Employment, Interior, and Maritime Trade with trade union representatives, the Greek Ombudsman, local authorities and local labour inspection offices. Six out of the 12 interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. In six interviews, officials refused to be tape recorded so interviewers took detailed notes. A range of new data (including stay permits issued/renewed, invitations by domestic employers to foreign workers, border apprehensions, foreign pupils in schools, asylum applications, naturalisations conceded) were collected during the aforementioned interviews and in separate contacts (via phone, e-mail or personal meetings) with officers from

¹ Ministry of Employment, Department of Employment (2 people); Ministry of Employment, Department implementing the EQUAL programme (2 people); Ministry of the Interior, Department of Stay Permits (2 people); Ministry of the Interior, Department of Integration (1 person); Ministry of the Interior, Police Directorate (1 person); Municipality of Athens (1); Municipality of Tavros at the eastern part of Athens (1); Head of the Regional Labour Inspectorate in northern Athens (1); representative of the Greek Workers' Confederation (GSEE) (1); interview with the Assistant Ombudsman for Human Rights (1); and the Ministry of Maritime Trade, Security department (1).

international organisations (UN office in Athens) and other ministries (data from Ministry of Education, IPODE-Institute for Intercultural Education).

2. The Transition from an Emigration to an Immigration Country

2.1 Emigration during the 20th century

Mass emigration from Greece can be separated into two phases: the first one took place between the 1890s and the early 20th century, while the second one occurred from 1955 to 1973 (Kasimis and Kassimi, 2004; Venturas, 2004). In addition, during the Greek Civil War, between 1946 and 1949 about 130,000 people were forced to seek asylum in other countries as political refugees (Vergeti, 2003).

The first massive emigration wave from Greece took place in the period between the end of the 1890s and the early 20th century. It was triggered by the financial crisis resulting from the rapid fall in the price of currants, Greece's major export product at the time (Kasimis and Kassimi, 2004). Emigration from this region had occurred before but never at such a large scale, in fact it is estimated that around half a million Greeks migrated to the United States between the 1890s and the first half of the 1920s (Venturas, 2004).

Following this first economic migration, about 130,000 people migrated in the aftermath of the Greek civil war to Socialist countries in Central Eastern Europe. Vergeti (2003) notes that 25,000 were members of the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE-Dimokratikos Stratos Elladas), 15,000 were politically active citizens and party members while the remaining 90,000 were civilians, coming mostly from areas near the northern Greek borders (Vergeti, 2003)².

The second wave of massive emigration that started in the 1950s and lasted till the mid-1970s was associated with the consequences of the civil war (1946-1949) and the period of military dictatorship (1967-1974). The number of people who migrated from Greece during this period exceeds one million.³ In fact, according to official statistics between 1955 and 1973, 603,300 Greeks migrated to Germany, 170,700 to Australia, 124,000 to the United States and 80,200 to Canada (Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004). The largest part of the emigrants came from rural areas, mostly from the region of Macedonia (Robolis, 2007).

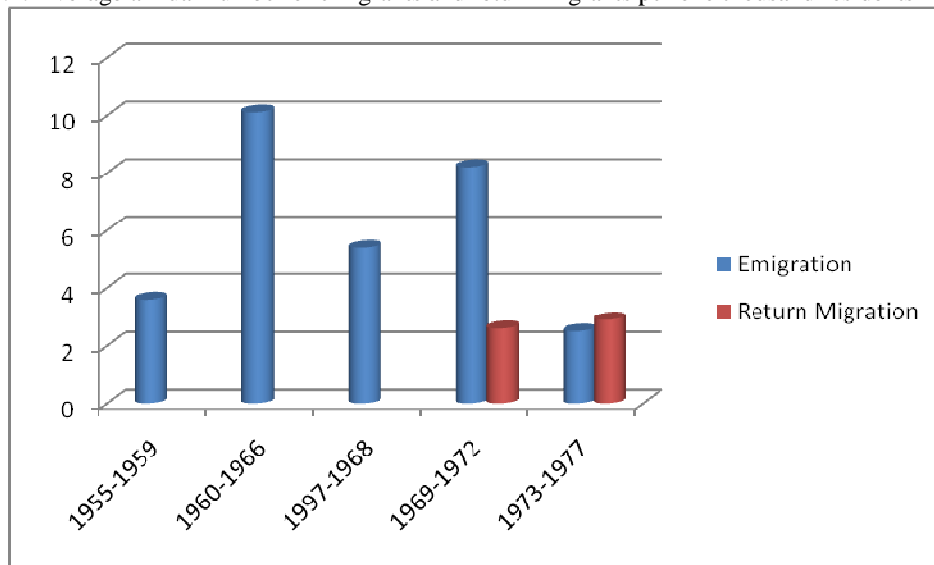
In the years between 1955 and 1959 the major trend was overseas migration and the annual rates of emigrations were about 3.6 emigrants per one thousand residents. In the period between 1960 and 1966 the rates rose to 10.11 emigrants per one thousand

² According to Vergeti the source of this information is a study by Katerina Soultania, «Η αποκατάσταση των Ελλήνων επαναπατρισθέντων Πολιτικών Προσφύγων» (The rehabilitation of the repatriated Greek Political Refugees), in 'Πρόγραμμα ερευνών αποδημίας-παλιννόστησης του ελληνικού πληθυσμού: εισαγωγικές προσεγγίσεις' (Research program of emigration-repatriation of the Greek population: introductory approaches) Vol. 1. K. Soultania has gathered the research material through visits to political refugee Associations, banks, ministries, the Parliament, the publisher of the Official Gazette (*Εθνικό Τυπογραφείο*) and other services.

³ Emigration thus was equal to nearly 15% of the total population which in 1961 stood at 8.4 million, and in 1971 at 8.8 million. For more details see data from the National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE) at: http://www.kethi.gr/greek/statistika/Apasxolisi/APOGRAFI_01.htm last visited on 21 June 2008.

residents with Germany as the main destination country. In both these periods emigration from Greece was of an economic character. In 1967 and 1968, the emigration rates dropped to 5.4 emigrants per one thousand residents due to economic recession in Western Europe, but in the years between 1969 and 1972 it rose again to 8.2 emigrants per one thousand residents, probably rising along with the increase in the productivity rates of the destination countries. After 1973, and following the oil crisis and the closing of all migration routes to northern and western Europe, emigration rates fell dramatically and were soon exceeded by incoming return migration⁴ (Vergeti, 2003 & Papadakis, 1990: 62-65).

Figure 2.1: Average annual number of emigrants and return migrants per one thousand residents



Source: Papadakis, M. (1990: 63-64).

2.2 Return Migration

Return migration can be voluntary, driven by social factors such as the need for social integration or problems related with the second generation, or forced, caused by economic recession in the host countries. Usually it is triggered by a combination of financial, social and political factors in both the sending and receiving countries (Kasimati, 1984).

According to Maria Vergeti (2003), the main motivation of Greek return migrants from the US and Australia was nostalgia, while those returning from countries of central and south Africa left because of political instability, racial conflict and civil confrontations in the area. Western European countries, on the other hand, stopped receiving new foreign workers after 1973 and this stricter policy, combined with the economic depression, enforced a tendency of return migration, mostly from Germany (Vergeti, 2003). Other

⁴ Indeed the total population of Greece jumped from 8.8 to 9.8 million in the period between 1971 and 1981, not least because of the halt in emigration and the beginning of return migration.

factors that influenced return migration were the restoration of democracy in Greece in 1974 and the economic prospects that developed due to Greece's entry into the European Economic Community in 1981 (Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004).

Koula Kasimati (1984), based on empirical studies conducted in several Eastern Mediterranean sending countries, attempts to sketch the profile of the return migrant. She notes that the typical return migrants were those who had spent a shorter period abroad, were separated from their families, came from rural areas and desired to return to their villages or had migrated through formal channels and were forced to return after 1973 due to the economic depression in the host countries caused by the oil crisis (Kasimati, 1984).

In the period between 1971 and 1986, 625,000 emigrants returned to and settled permanently back in Greece. About half of those returning from Germany settled in the area of Macedonia, while those returning from overseas settled mostly in Attica, Peloponnesus and the Aegean islands. Almost half of them (48%) preferred settlement in Greece's two largest cities, Athens and Thessaloniki (Vergeti, 2003).

As for political refugees, they mostly⁵ started repatriating after 1974. Until 1983, their repatriation occurred in an individual manner, in other words, every application for repatriation by a political refugee was examined separately. After 1983 there was a common ministerial decision made by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Public Order, allowing free repatriation and granting Greek citizenship to those who had lost it. There was also a series of bilateral agreements between the Greek state and Central Eastern European countries in order to ensure the repatriates' retirement funds (Vergeti, 2003).

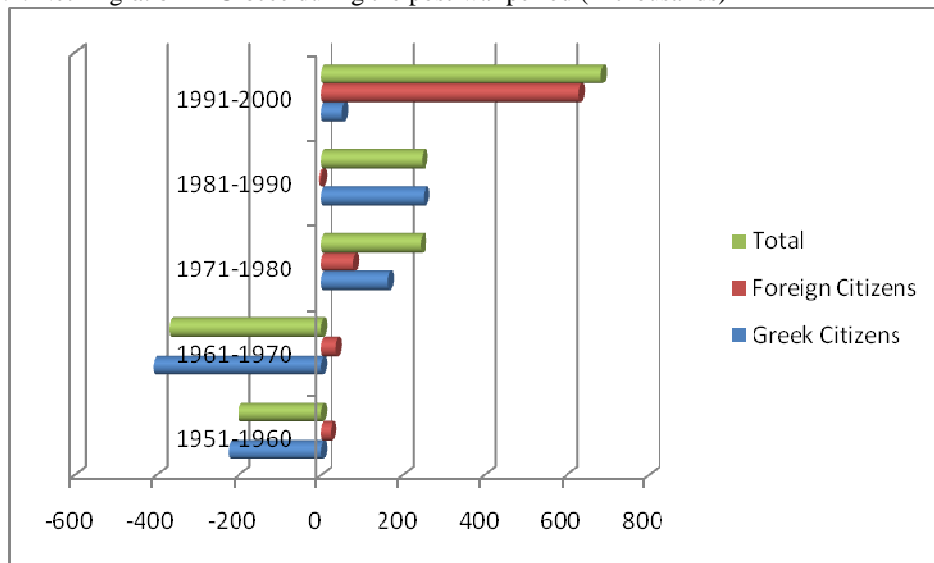
Socio-economic circumstances in Greece were not ideal for the return migrants. During the 1980s, unemployment rates were higher among return immigrants than among 'locals', mostly due to their lack of training or the mismatch between their skills and the Greek labour market (Kasimati 1984). In addition, those who returned tended to be selective and looked for occupations of higher status. Because of the conditions of the labour market, the return migrants eventually chose to become self-employed. The Greek state policies developed in order to address the return migrants' problems aimed only to treat immediate needs and lacked a long-term perspective (Kasimati, 1984).

Within the framework of the Research Program for Emigration and Repatriation of the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad, a microcensus in 1985-6 was carried out, based on a sample of 3.6% of the Greek population (based on 1981 census data). Petropoulos and his co-authors (1992) who analysed the micro-census data note that the Greek state planned to take advantage of the emigrant employment experience in the industrial sector with an aim to utilize this to promote the country's industrialization. However, the authors note that although that the repatriates' share in the secondary and tertiary sectors

⁵ In 1954, 5,000 children returned to Greece with the help of the International Red Cross, and another 7,872 people returned in the period between 1956 and 1974, but the main wave of repatriation started after 1974. (Vergeti, 2003)

of the economy and lower in the primary sector (than those who had never migrated), this difference did not affect the industrial dynamic of the country (Petropoulos et al., 1992: 121-122). Regarding the labour market dynamics of the return migrant population, it is also worth noting that 57% of Greek emigrant women were employed outside the home while abroad but 63% of the repatriated women (15 years of age or older) did not work or sought employment. In other words, we can observe a return to traditional family roles among emigrant women after repatriation (Petropoulos et al., 1992: 142).

Figure 2.2: Net Migration in Greece during the post-war period (in thousands)



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, cit. in *Kathimerini*, English edition, 18-19 January 2003, available at http://www.migrantsingreece.org/files/STAT_8.bmp, accessed on 3/9/2007.

2.3 The shift to immigration

The migration balance started becoming positive for Greece during the 1970s, due to return migration, but immigration started growing as well in the early 1980s, after a small number of Africans, Asians and Poles settled in Greece and started working in construction, agriculture and domestic services. However, their overall number was considerably low (Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004). The 1991 population census registered 167,000 foreigners in Greece out of a population of 10.3 million residing in Greece (that is, slightly above 1 %).

After the collapse of the Central Eastern European communist regimes in 1989, migration to Greece, especially from neighbouring countries such as Albania and Bulgaria, rose dramatically. Soon thereafter, during the first half of the 1990s, migration flows became massive. Greece's transition to a country of immigration is closely linked to the overall geopolitical changes in Europe and in the Balkan region, the collapse of Communism and the dismantling of labour markets and welfare regimes in Central and southeastern Europe, which created a massive emigration wave to other European countries. The

geographic position of the country at the fringes of the EU (then EEC), its economic growth during the 1980s and a result of Greece's accession to the European Economic Communities (EEC) in 1981, and, finally, the rise in living standards and educational level of native youth who started refusing seasonal jobs or work in the informal economy and who waited, instead, for jobs that would match their qualifications and/or be of better pay and higher status, created a pool of work available for migrants. This, in turn, led to a demand for a work force ready to fill these job vacancies, in the lower end of the occupational scale (Kasimis & Kassimi 2004). In addition, some argue that immigrants responded to a demographic deficit experienced by rural areas connected with emigration from those areas. (see C. Kasimis & G. Papadopoulos, 2005: 107) Thus, major push factors from abroad combined with internal developments in the Greek economy and labour market to produce a dramatic change⁶ in Greece's demography, society and economy. This new situation is described and commented upon in the sections that follow.

⁶ Naturally, once migration started, further elements came into play, including the role of migrant informal networks, the role of human smuggling organisations, and a demand for an additional labour force that was generated by the very existence of plentiful and cheap unskilled or semi-skilled migrant labour. These issues are discussed in section 4 below.

3. Main Demographic Features

3.1 The Size of the Immigrant Population

According to the last census of the National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), that took place in 2001, there were 797,091 foreign residents in Greece. Of those, 750,000 were citizens from outside the EU-15 countries. If we also include the population of repatriated Greeks from the former Soviet Union who migrated to Greece predominantly during the 1990s, which, according to a census carried out by the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics in 2000, numbered 155,319 people (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000), the actual number of migrants in Greece in 2001 increases to approximately 900,000.

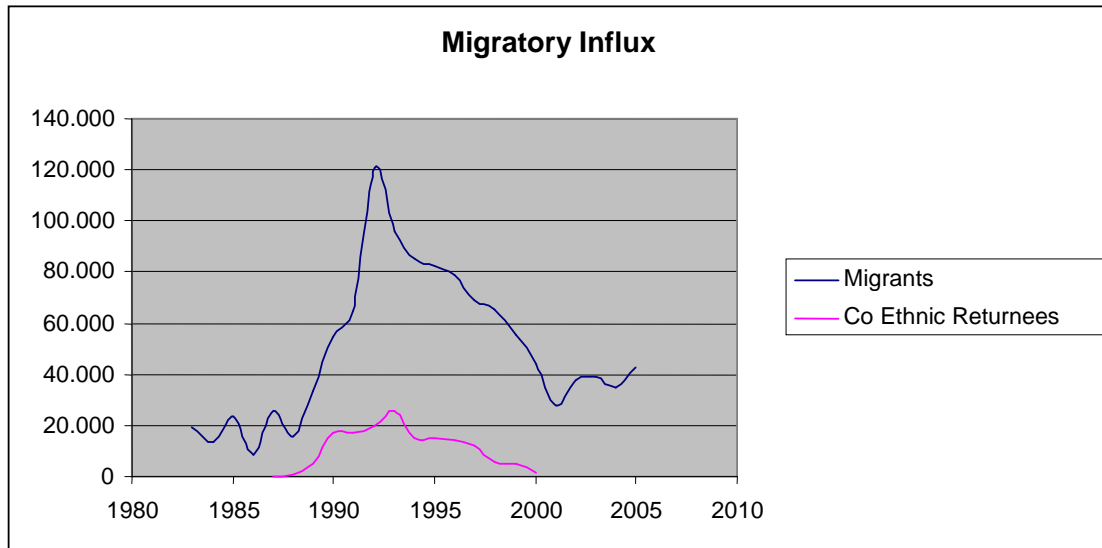
Based on the last census of the National Statistical Service of Greece and the census of the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 1992 and 1993 were the years in which the largest influx of immigrants was registered (see Chart 3.1, below).

Recent research carried out by the National Statistical Service of Greece, on the augmentation of the Greek population between 1983 and 2005 suggests that the total population of migrants, both regular and irregular, including co-ethnic returnees, reached the number of 1,138,021 people in 2005 (ALPHA Bank, 2005).

According to data of the Ministry of the Interior, there were 432,000 stay permits in force for non-EU25 citizens on 30 April 2008. In a recent research interview (Int. 2) an officer from the Ministry of the Interior estimated the number of permits currently in process (hence not included in the aforementioned 432,000) by municipal and regional offices to be at 400,000. At a conference in Athens, on 22 November 2007, the President of the Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO) contradicted the authors who cited this estimate and put the number at no more than 250,000 in total. In Table 3.2 below we use this more conservative estimate to calculate the total immigrant stock in Greece today.⁷

⁷ We are currently awaiting the results of an internal census of the Ministry of the Interior (Aliens' Directorate) aimed at registering all the applications that are currently in process at the municipal and regional offices across Greece.

Figure 3.1: Migration influx towards Greece during the past 20 years



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece cited in ALPHA Bank, 2005, p. 5. The data also include co ethnic repatriates' and General Secretariat of Repatriated Co Ethnic, 2000, p. 45

Permits that are being processed do not appear in the Ministry of the Interior records or indeed in any records as valid permits. Nonetheless, applicants for issuing/renewing a stay permit who have received a blue receipt proving that they submitted a complete application for issuing/renewing a stay permit are treated generally by local and state authorities as regular migrants. In effect, they can live their lives *almost* as if they held valid permits. If checked during a random internal control they are not charged and during the Christmas, Easter or summer breaks they can travel back to their countries of origin on the basis of special press releases of the Ministry of Interior (formerly Ministry of Public Order)⁸ issued before each holiday period. This happens because Greek authorities are aware of the long delays (that endure, in the best of cases, for 3 months and, in the worse of cases, for over a year) that many migrants experience in the issuing/renewing of their stay permits⁹ by the relevant municipal, regional and Ministry of the Interior offices. Migrants holding the 'blue receipts', though, cannot travel to other countries nor can they travel to their country of origin at any time they wish to do so. They are also unable to sign legal documents or address requests to public agencies as they are not fully 'legal.' In effect, they are held 'hostages' by the inefficiency of the Greek administration.

Greek co-ethnics who are Albanian citizens (*Voreioepirotos*) hold Special Identity Cards for *Omogeneis* (co-ethnics) (EDTO) issued by the Greek police. EDTO holders are not included in the Ministry of the Interior data on aliens. After repeated requests, the

⁸ These press releases state what kind of documents the migrant who wants to travel back to her/his country of origin needs to have with him or her in order to be re-admitted into Greece. See, for instance, the press release issued on Friday 23 November 2007 for the Christmas break of 2007 and the press release of 16 March 2007 for the Easter break of the same year.

⁹ This issue is discussed in more detail in the section on labour force management below.

Ministry of Interior has released data on the actual number of valid EDTO to this date. The total number is 185,000.

Alongside the non-EU citizens and the Voreioepirotos, we should consider as immigrants in substance, even if not in form, the co-ethnic returnees from the former Soviet Republics, generally referred to as *Pontic Greeks* who arrived in Greece in the late 1980s and early 1990s as economic migrants. According to the special census administered by the General Secretariat for Repatriated Co-Ethnics in the year 2000, 155,319 Pontic Greeks had settled in the country. More than half of them (about 80,000) came from Georgia, 31,000 came from Kazakhstan, 23,000 from Russia, and about 9,000 from Armenia. (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000)

Table 3.1 Estimate of total immigrant stock in Greece, April 2008

	Stocks*	% of total population	Source of data
Valid stay permits	432,000	3.93	Ministry of the Interior, valid permits on 30 April 2008
EU citizens with valid stay permits	54,000	0.49	Ministry of the Interior, 30 April 2008
Estimate of stay permits in process	250,000	2.27	Ministry of the Interior, November 07
Co-ethnics holding Special Identity Cards (EDTO)	185,000	1.72	Ministry of the Interior, April 2008
Co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union (Greek citizens)	154,000	1.40	Census of General Secretariat for Repatriated Co-ethnics, 2000
Irregular migrants	167,000	1.52	Authors' own estimate
Total (including co-ethnics)	1,246,000	11.33	
Total (excluding co-ethnics)	903,000	8.21	
Total of legal migrants	1,075,000	9.81	Including those whose permits are in process
Total Population of Greece	11,000,000	100.00	Census 2001, rounded to the nearest million

* Rounded to the nearest thousand.

Kanellopoulos et al. (2006) estimate the number of irregular migrants in 2004 at 300,000. In the meantime, however, there had been two broad regularisation programmes that applied only to people who had entered Greece before 31 December 2004. The first was introduced by law 3386/2005 and lasted until 31 December 2006, with a reported number

of 200,000 applicants (Zografakis et al. 2007: 92). This regularisation was aimed at people who held permits under the provisions of law 2910/2001, who held EDTO cards or who had seen their applications for permits or EDTO cards rejected and who resided in Greece before 31 December 2004. In other words, this programme was aimed at giving a second chance to all those who had fallen back to illegality for one reason or other. Zografakis and his co-authors (2007: 93) estimate that these 200,000 applications included a total of 40,000 children that are not included in the number of applications.¹⁰

The second and most recent regularisation programme was enacted with law 3536/2007 (February 2007), which facilitated or simplified some of the welfare stamp¹¹ requirements foreseen by law 3386/2005 for the issuing/renewal of stay permits or for changes in the type of permit (for dependent work, for independent work or for study purposes). The Ministry of the Interior (Press release of 6 March 2008) has amended the relevant provisions concerning welfare stamps, allowing all immigrants who are renewing their stay permits buy up to 20% of the required 400 welfare stamps in the 2-year period of stay permit renewal. There are no data available as to how many people have taken advantage of these provisions.

During the same period, i.e. 2005-2007, there were more than 150,000 people apprehended at the Greek sea and land borders. Assuming that the majority of those apprehended¹² ‘disappear’ into the immigrant networks and informal labour market of Athens and Thessalonike despite the deportation order that they receive (see also Kanellopoulos et al. 2006: 58-59), we can estimate that there are at least 100,000 irregular aliens that entered Greece after 31.12.2004 and who are most likely still in the country. This is of course a conservative estimate, assuming that all those who entered Greece before 31.12.2004 have been regularised. Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos (2007:

¹⁰ Minors registered in their parents’ stay permits were not included in the data released by the Ministry of Interior until the end of 2005. It is only since 1 January 2006 that data on valid stay permits also include the number of minors registered.

¹¹ Applicants are required to prove they accrued 200 working days each year by showing that they had made the necessary welfare contributions for health and pension insurance. Such contributions are normally paid by the employer for all dependent employees. However, in certain sectors such as construction, agriculture, cleaning and catering, employers often employ workers, especially immigrant workers, without a proper contract and without making the necessary welfare payments. In those cases, and with the aim of allowing immigrants with unstable jobs obtain legal status, regularisation programmes in Greece have allowed foreign workers to ‘buy’ these daily welfare stamps individually as proof of their employment. Naturally, this practice has also contributed large sums of money to the Greek welfare system. Law 3536/2007 offers a second chance to those who were in the country by 31.12.2004 and who had seen their permit applications rejected because they did not fulfil the 200 daily stamps requirement to apply again and to buy the missing stamps. This provision actually has a permanent character: migrants may buy up to 20% of the requested welfare stamps in the 2 year period (400 day welfare stamps for 2 years). This measure aims at legalising the stays of people who have been living and working in Greece for several years but who are unable to prove their employment through their welfare contributions. A Ministry of the Interior official interviewed in November 2007 (Int. 2) expressed her distress in that they had to allow for this provision – thus putting the welfare payments’ burden again on the shoulders of the migrant workers and letting exploitative employers get away with this – but admitted that this was better than rejecting people’s applications and letting them fall back to irregular status.

¹² For a discussion of the border apprehension regime and what happens to apprehended irregular migrants see section 5 below.

93) estimate that there were 67,000 irregular migrants who did not apply under the 2006 regularisation programme, basing their calculation on the estimated percentage of non-participation to the previous regularisation programmes of 1998 and 2001. It is safe to assume that these people are not included in the permit applications currently in process and that they are currently in Greece with irregular status. Thus we estimate that there are about 167,000 irregular migrants residing in Greece (see Table 3.1 above).

Table 3.2: Apprehensions of illegal aliens in Greece

Year	2005	2006	2007*	Entire period
Apprehended at the sea borders	4,974	9,049	9,000	23,023
Apprehended at the land borders	37,867	53,556	42,980	134,403
Apprehended in the inland	23,510	32,634	17,865	74,009
Total	66,351	95,239	69,845	231,435

Source: Ministry of Interior, Police Command Office, Branch of Security and Order, Aliens' Directorate, 4th department, 15 October 2007.

* Data for 2007 refer to the period January to August 2007.

Thus, according to our calculations, there are currently about 900,000 immigrants in Greece, excluding those of Greek ethnic origin (Pontic Greeks who have received citizenship and *Voreioipirotes* who hold EDTO cards). Of these, at least 680,000 hold legal status (or are in the process of renewing their legal status). If co-ethnics are included, the number of people of immigrant origin residing in Greece rises to 1.24 million that is about 10% of the total population. This number is clearly higher than the estimate of the National Statistical Service of Greece and of Zografakis et al. (2007: 89, table 3.1) which puts the total stock at 970,000 (National Statistical Service) or 1,020,000 (Zografakis et al. 2007). Their estimates are calculated on the basis of the natural growth of the population (native and immigrant) and on an assumption of roughly 40,000 new entries per year in the period 2001-2006). We believe that our estimate is likely to be closer to the truth, although a more accurate estimate can only be achieved if we know how many permits are currently being processed by municipal and regional authorities. The database of valid permits held and updated by the Ministry of Interior is of a dynamic nature: the number of permits can vary between days or weeks. Given the long delays in the processing of applications, however, this database fails to capture the total migration stock in the country.

3.2 National Composition of the Immigrant Population

Migrants in Greece come mostly from neighbouring countries. More than half of Greece's foreign population comes from Albania while the second largest group comprises Bulgarians, but their percentage of the total migrant population is considerably smaller. The following table contains data from the last census (2001), data from the Ministry of the Interior concerning the number of stay permits that were valid in April 2008 and also data from the Headquarters of the Greek Police concerning the number of valid EDTO cards and valid stay permits for EU citizens for the same month, but do not include data on valid permits of refugees and asylum seekers or the number of applications that are being processed.

It is difficult to compare the data for 2001 with those of 2008 (table 3.3 below) because

the 2001 census data include undocumented migrants since the census services made an explicit effort to register all aliens residing in the country. It remains unknown, however, what percentage of the undocumented population was eventually registered in the census. The data for 2008, on the other hand, include only migrants who hold valid permits and exclude those who are undocumented, those whose permits are under process but also those who are in Greece as refugees or asylum seekers. However, Table 3.3 does give us some valuable information regarding the larger national groups present within the immigrant stock in Greece. While Albanian citizens represent approximately 60% of the total immigrant population in 2001, in 2008 they represent almost 70% of the legal foreign population that resides in the country. The percentages of Moldovan, Ukrainian and Pakistani citizens within the total legal foreign population in April 2008 are higher than the corresponding percentages in the 2001 census. This increase shows, most likely, an increase in the actual numbers but also an emergence of the respective national groups from undocumented status.

In the following sections, we shall briefly review the demographic and socio-economic profile of the immigrant population on the basis of the 2001 census data and the demographic and socio-economic features of the co-ethnic population from the former Soviet Union republics as described in the Special Census of 2000.

Table 3.3 National Composition of the Migration Stock in 2001 and 2008

Country of Origin	Census 2001		Valid Permits April 2008		EU Citizens Valid Permits April 2008		All foreigners EU and non-EU 39,539	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albania	438,036	57,49%	274,390	63,51%			459,390 ¹³	68,47
Bulgaria	35,104	4,60%	18,154	4,2%	11,805	21,90%	29,959	4,47
Georgia	22,875	3,00%	12,825	2,96%			12,825	1,91
Rumania	21,994	2,88%	10,574	2,44%	8,775	16,28%	19,349	2,88
USA	18,140	2,38%	1,893				1,893	
Russia	17,535	2,30%	10,564	2,44%			10,564	1,57
Cyprus	17,426	2,28%			5,592	10,37%	5,592	0,83
Ukraine	13,616	1,78%	17,456	4,04%			17,456	2,60
UK	13,196	1,73%			6,715	12,45%	6,715	1,00
Poland	12,831	1,68%	876	0,20%	6,922	12,84%	7,798	1,16
Germany	11,806	1,54%			4,063	7,53%	4,063	0,61
Pakistan	11,130	1,46%	11,084	2,56%			11,084	1,65
Australia	8,767	1,15%						
Turkey	7,881	1,03%	1,069	0,24%			1,069	0,16
Egypt	7,448	0,97%	10,090	2,33%			10,090	1,50
India	7,216	0,94%	8,688	2,01%			8,688	1,29
Philippines	6,478	0,85%	6,790	1,57%			6,790	1,01
Italy	5,825	0,76%			2,218	4,11%	2,218	0,33
Moldavia	5,718	0,75%	8,767	2,02%			8,767	1,31
Syria	5,552	0,72%	5,586	1,29%			5,586	0,83
Bangladesh	4854	0,63%	3,761	0,87%			3,761	0,56
OTHER	68,385	8,97%	29,455	6,81%	7,810	18,60%	37,265	5,55
TOTAL	761,813	100,00%	432,022	100,00%	53,900	100,00%	670,922	100,00

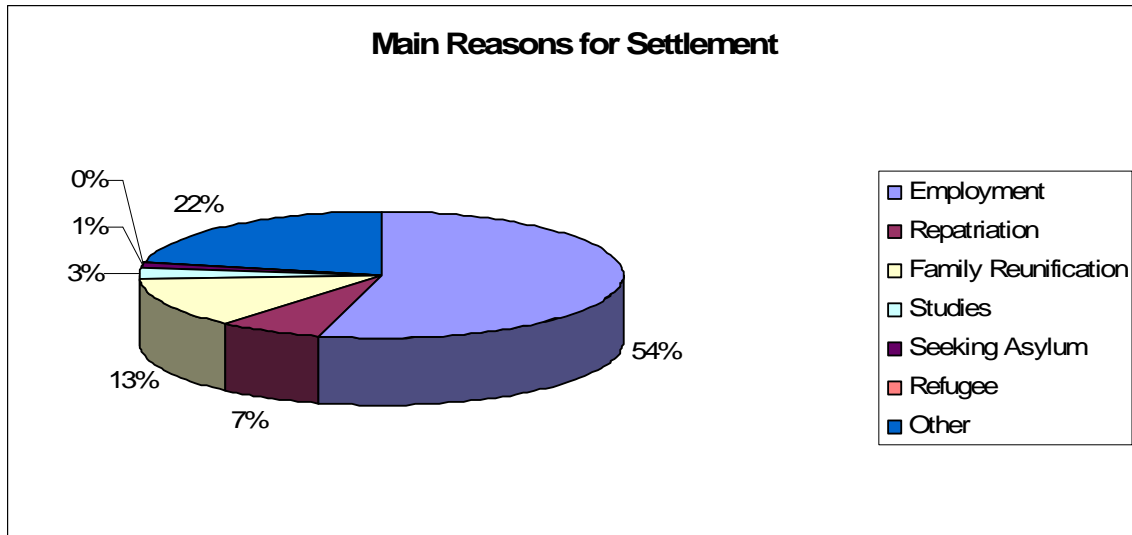
Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Census 2001, and Ministry of Interior. Data for 2001 include both regular and undocumented migrants and exclude citizens from the EU 15. Data for 2008 include only legal non EU immigrants with valid stay permits and EU citizens registered with police authorities (holders of stay permits)

¹³ This is the total number of Albanian citizens residing in Greece, including 185,000 co-ethnics holding special identity cards (EDTO).

3.3 Reasons for Migrating to Greece

According to the census of the National Statistical Service of Greece in 2001, the principal reason for migrant settlement in Greece was the seeking of employment, followed by family reunification, while the percentages of asylum seekers and refugees were quite low (see Chart 3.2 below).

Figure 3.2: Reasons for migrating to Greece



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Census 2001

The largest percentage (42%) of the co-ethnic returnees from the former Soviet Union state that they decided to leave their country because they wanted to come to Greece. The second most important (22%) reason was unemployment in their country of origin while the third one was civil war in their country of origin (19%) along with terrorism (6%). Finally 8% of the repatriated Greeks from ex-USSR countries state that they came to Greece following relatives (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000: 52).

3.4 Gender¹⁴ and Age

Based on the 2001 census, the percentage of men who migrated to Greece is larger than that of women (54% and 46% accordingly). It is worth noting, however, that there is a gender imbalance with regard to specific countries of origin. For example, 96% of the Pakistani, 94% of the Bangladeshi, and 92% of the Indian immigrants are men. On the other hand 76% of the Filipino and 60% of the Bulgarian migrants are women.

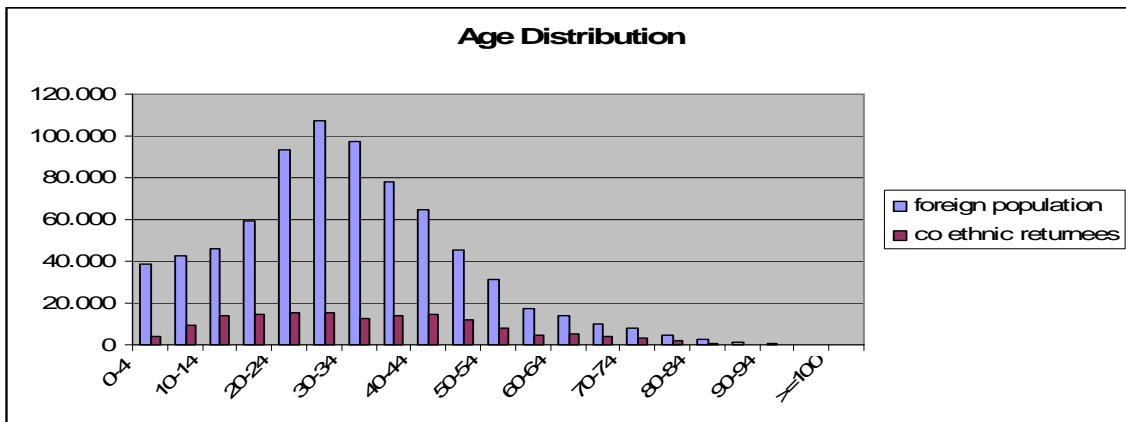
There is also a gender difference as regards the reasons for migrating to Greece: 59% of men who have settled in Greece did so in order to work, while the corresponding percentage for women is 49%. Accordingly, 15% of women settled in Greece for family reunification while the corresponding percentage for men is 11.5%.

It does not come as a surprise that most of the migrants who live and work in Greece are part of the most productive age groups. More specifically, most of the immigrants are classified in the age groups of 25 to 29 and 29 to 34 years old. Correspondingly, only 7% of the co-ethnic returnees from the former Soviet Union are of a retirement age, while the highest

¹⁴ Unfortunately, although the census of the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-ethnics is generally detailed, it does not contain any data on the gender of the co-ethnic returnees.

concentration is almost equally spread in the age groups between 19 and 40 years old. More details on the age configuration of immigrants can be found in Chart 3.3.

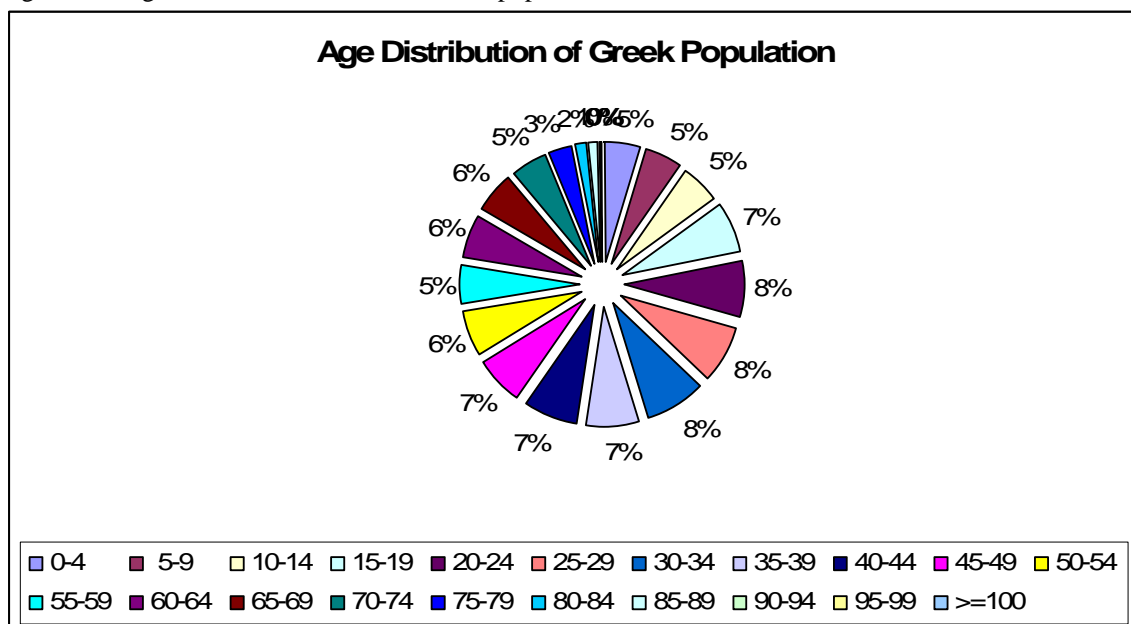
Figure 3.3: Age distribution of the foreigner population in Greece



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Census 2001 and General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000, pp. 60-61

By contrast, the age distribution pattern for the total Greek population is different (see Chart 3.4 above). The total population is almost evenly distributed (5%-8% in every age group) with an exception for the group above 75 years of age.

Figure 3.4: Age distribution of the total Greek population



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Census 2001

3.5 Marital Status and Family Composition

Most of the immigrants residing in Greece are married (48%). The second largest percentage is that of singles (44%), while divorced, separated and widowed percentages are considerably low. The corresponding percentages for the total population of Greece are 55% married and 33% single.

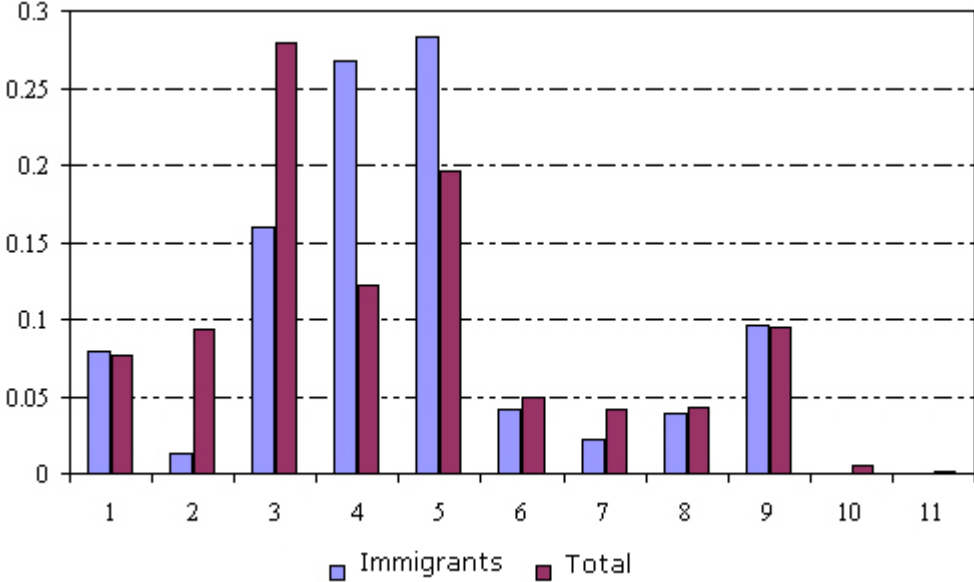
Due to the different questionnaires used by the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, we have no information on their marital status but we have data on the composition of their families. Most of the families comprise four members (28%) followed by those composed by three members (20%). Most of the families are constituted by a couple and their children (46.5%) followed by single individuals (17.3%) (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000: 56 and 58).

3.6 Educational Level

According to data from the last Household Budget Survey carried out by the National Statistical Service processed by Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos (2007) immigrants are mostly junior or senior high-school graduates (59.3%). Moreover, as these data show (see Chart 5 below) the percentages of immigrants who have not gone to school, as well as those of university graduates, are very close to each other (Zografakis et al., 2007: 49-50).

The educational level of immigrants varies mostly according to their nationality. Generally, the educational level of Asian immigrants is lower than the average of the total foreign population and they face great difficulties in learning Greek. As a result, the place reserved for them in the labour market is that of low payment and low specialization employment (Tonchev, 2007). Albanian immigrants, on the other hand, have a relatively high educational level and the majority speaks good or fluent Greek. However, there is a considerable mismatch between their educational level and the type of work they perform (Lyberaki and Maroukis, 2004). The cases of Bulgarian immigrants and repatriated Greeks from the former Soviet Union are also similar to that of the Albanians; there is a gap between their skills and their employment status. It is worth noting that Pontic Greeks have, on average, a higher level of education than Greek natives (Marouf, 2006).

Figure 3.5: Educational level of Total and Immigrant population (2004-2005)



1. Did not go to school, 2. Did not finish elementary school, 3. Finished elementary school, 4. Finished junior high-school, 5. Finished high school, 6. Graduated from technical secondary education, 7. Vocational training, 8. Graduated from a technical institution, 9. Graduated from a university or a higher military school, 10. Master's degree, 11. PhD.

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Household Budget Survey 2004/2005, processed by Zografakis et al. (2007:50)

4. Immigrant Insertion in the Greek Labour Market

This brief overview of the immigrant population demographic characteristics shows that it is a young and economically active population that mainly came to Greece to find employment. Our data also show that there are important variations at the educational level of different nationalities. In this section we comment on the structural imbalance of the Greek labour market and then analyse the immigrant insertion in the Greek economy looking at the 'careers' of different nationalities.

Greece is characterised by high unemployment rates especially among the youth, women and people with secondary education. OECD data for 2007¹⁵ show that the unemployment rate was 8.3%, while in 2006 there were more than 400,000 people registered as unemployed. However, there is an important imbalance in the unemployment rates of the two genders. The female rate of unemployment is nearly 13%, while for men it is 5.2%. Unemployment particularly affects youth between 15 and 29 years of age, climbing at 17.3 for both genders and at 22% for women in this age group (data from the National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), referring to May 2008, obtained on 20 June 2008). Also, women's participation in the labour force is rather low: 47.3% (data from OECD for 2006).

At first glance, it may come as a surprise that, in the mid-1990s, there was half a million migrants employed in the Greek informal economy mainly. The explanation is relatively simple and, unfortunately, there seems to be a common pattern among southern European countries: the Greek labour market is characterised by high segmentation with special employment niches occupied by migrant workers. The native population's living standards have increased in recent decades and there is widespread participation in tertiary and higher education. Thus, young Greeks prefer to wait for employment that conforms to their skills, while being financially supported by their families, rather than take up a low-prestige, low-skilled and low-paying job.

OECD comparative statistical data¹⁶ on participation and unemployment rates of foreigners and natives in southern European countries in the early 2000s (OECD 2001, Table 5.3) revealed a distinctive combination of higher immigrant participation rates and similar or lower unemployment rates than natives. Looking at the OECD data (OECD 2001, Table 5.4) by type of economic activity, in Greece, about one fourth of all migrants worked in construction, 20% in mining and manufacturing, 20% in retail and wholesale services and another 20% in households. Even if these data covered only a small part of the immigrant population in Greece, they clearly illustrated the segmented nature of the Greek job market and the fact that immigrant employment was concentrated in specific economic sectors.

Empirical research on the insertion of immigrants into the Greek economy showed high levels of employment in the agricultural sector and in unskilled work (about 30% and 12% respectively, in four regions of northern Greece) (Lianos et al. 1996). This research, conducted in the mid-1990s, showed also that the salary of migrant workers was, on average, 40% lower than that of natives. As nearly all workers at the time were undocumented, they did not benefit from insurance coverage, and their employers 'saved' that cost too. This study concluded that natives and foreigners were only partly in competition for jobs, as the latter mostly took up work that the former did not accept.

¹⁵ See <https://stats.oecd.org>.

¹⁶ These data are based on the national censuses conducted in several countries in 2000 and 2001.

Similar patterns of limited competition were shown by a study concentrating on the agricultural sector (Vaiou and Hatzimichalis 1997). The authors pointed to the seasonal character of migration in northern Greece where immigrants from neighbouring (Bulgaria and later Albania) and even more distant (Poland) countries were employed in seasonal agricultural work. Such work had long been turned down by natives and, even before the massive arrival of immigrant workers, such jobs were usually taken up by members of the Muslim minority in western Thrace.

Studies concentrated in the late 1990s paint a more complete picture of immigrant contribution to the Greek economy, and, in particular, of their insertion into the labour market. Sarris and Zografakis (1999) have argued that immigration overall has a beneficial impact on the Gross National Product (1.5% increase), on private investments (0.9% increase) and on the cost of living (maintained). Immigrants also contribute to an increase in national production. In two-thirds of the cases, they take up jobs that natives reject, but immigrants also contribute to creating new jobs (or maintaining existing ones) as their work makes some small and medium enterprises economically viable, it revitalises some economic sectors (such as agriculture and construction), and overall while depressing low-skill wages it comparatively increases skilled wages (see also Baldwin Edwards and Safilios-Rotchild 1999). These findings are similar to those of a study on the effects of immigrant labour on the Italian economy and job market (Reyneri 1998).

Sarris and Zografakis (1999) showed, already in the late 1990s, that immigrants contributed to inducing a 1.5% growth to the Gross National Product (GNP) and that they had contributed to lowering prices by 2%, which meant that Greek products were becoming more competitive for exports. They calculated that about 50,000 natives had lost their jobs because of incoming immigrant labour and that wages had been lowered by 6% in total. They also, however, showed that two categories of Greek households, those with unskilled native workers and people with average or low incomes in urban areas (accounting for 37% of the total population) had been in competition or might have suffered from the impact of immigrants on the economy and the labour market. All other categories of the native population, both in urban regions and in rural ones (where all categories benefit from immigrant employment), had benefited from immigrant work. Immigrants had contributed to creating 20,000 high-skill jobs in the service sector in urban areas and 5,000 self-employed jobs in the rural areas. In sum, about two-thirds of the Greek population had experienced a positive impact while one-third experienced a negative impact of the presence of immigrant workers.

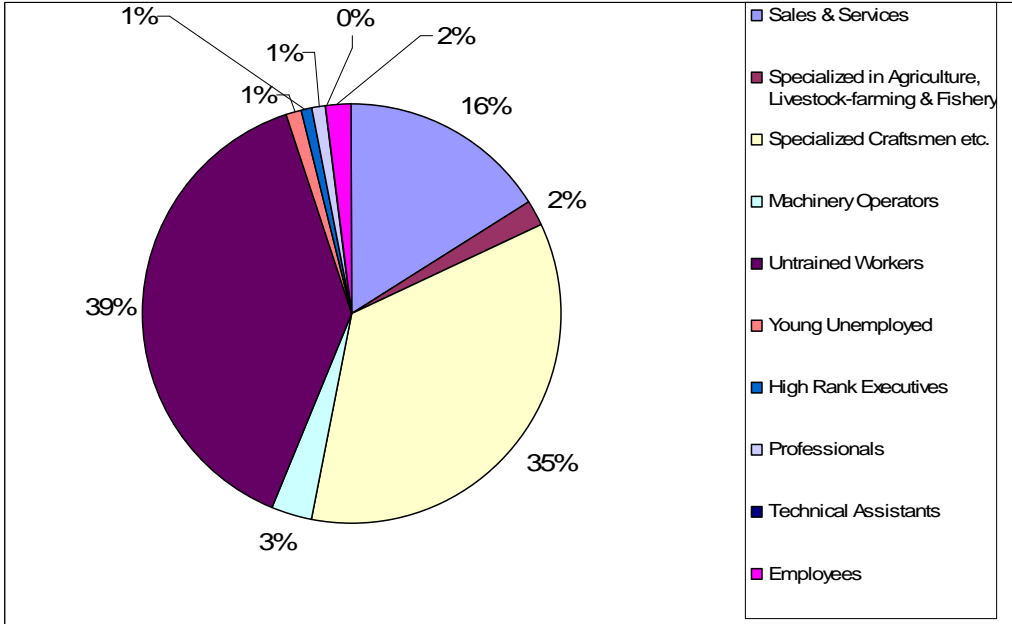
During the years 1999-2000 there was an increased demand for unskilled male workers for the construction sector and for women to be employed in cleaning and domestic care in the Athens area (Lianos, 2004). The demand for unskilled labourers was high in the years before the 2004 Olympic Games as many major public works were under development during that time. Indeed, in the construction sector, immigrants account for a large share of all workers. Among those, 82,922 men (72%) of the total number of immigrant construction workers are Albanians (National Insurance Service, IKA, data for 2005).

Recent data on immigrant insertion in the labour market (Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos 2007: 74) show that nearly 40% of foreign workers are employed as unskilled labourers, mainly in manual jobs, and another 35% are employed as skilled workers (craftsmen). An important part of the immigrant population, though, (15%) is now employed in the service sector and as salespeople in shops or open air markets. Other employees and technicians or

drivers account for 2% and 3%, respectively, of the immigrant labour force. It is also worth noting that only 2% of immigrants are currently employed in agriculture compared to 7% registered in that sector at the time of the 2001 census (see Chart 4.1 below).

The study by Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos (2007) shows also that immigrants (both regular and undocumented) contribute between 2.3% and 2.8% of the Gross National Product. Zografakis and his co-authors (ibid.) apply a social accounting method to calculate the contribution of immigrants to the GNP and to explore three different scenarios regarding the evolution of the migration phenomenon and its impact on the Greek economy and labour market. In the first scenario, they hypothesise that immigrants continue to work but stop consuming in the second scenario immigrant stocks increase by 200,000, and in the third scenario immigrants leave within a few years. In the first scenario, there is a negative impact on the economy because of the reduction in consumption levels, in the second scenario there is overall a positive impact because of increased consumption and production and because the newcomers also create new jobs. The migrants who arrived earlier in this scenario, however, suffer from increased competition and wages become lower overall. In the third scenario, assuming that migrants leave the country in three progressive stages and assuming that there is an increased flexibility of native workers, at least half of the 400,000 jobs that migrants leave vacant remains vacant, creating important negative pressures on Greek businesses and on the Greek economy as a whole. Overall consumption falls, GNP falls, the level of wages rises for unskilled workers and the income of poorer families rises, but the income for middle and upper social class families remains the same or decreases. The deficit in the national balance of payments also increases.

Figure 4.1: Immigrant Insertion into the Greek Labour Market (per sector of employment)



Source: Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos, 2007: 74.

The findings of Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos in their recent study appear similar to those of the 1999 study by Sarris and Zografakis. In other words, immigrants compete with unskilled and low/medium-low income natives for jobs but overall create new jobs for natives, increase consumption, decrease prices, make Greek products and businesses more competitive, and contribute thus positively to the national balance of payments. Moreover, in a number of sectors, immigrants take up jobs that Greeks are not willing to do. If immigrants

were not there to take these jobs, there would be important negative repercussions for Greek businesses, products and exports.

A clearer still, if partial (because it refers to waged labour, registered with welfare services) account is given by the National Welfare Institute's (IKA) most recent data made available in May 2006. In May 2006, foreign citizens accounted for 13.55% of all insured workers at IKA, albeit men accounted for nearly 17% while women for only about 10%. Albanian citizens accounted for nearly half of all foreigners registered with IKA. Among men, Albanians actually accounted for 60% of all foreign workers. The second largest nationality among men registered with IKA was, quite surprisingly, Pakistani citizens (6%), followed by Russians (slightly over 5%) and Romanians (5%). Among foreign women, Albanian citizens accounted for nearly 40% of all foreign women workers registered with IKA, Russian citizens for 17%, and Bulgarians for 12%. These data suggest an over-representation of Pakistani men among IKA-insured male workers and of Russian and Bulgarian women among IKA-insured female workers. At the same time, we note an under-representation of Albanian women in waged labour registered with IKA.

Regarding sector-specific employment, the data from IKA show that Greek and foreign workers have a significantly different pattern of distribution across sectors. Among Greek workers registered with IKA, about 20% are employed in sales, 20% in manufacturing, 10% in construction, 7% in transport and communications, and 7% in the management of real estate. Among Albanian citizens this distribution is different: about half work in construction, 15% in manufacturing, 13% in tourism and catering and 12% in sales. Among other foreigners (i.e., excluding Albanians and EU25 citizens), 22% work in construction (a percentage significantly lower than that registered for Albanian citizens), 24% in sales (double the percentage of Albanians), another 24% in manufacturing (again a significantly higher percentage than that of Albanians). About 16% of other foreigners work in catering and tourism (slightly higher percentage than that registered for Albanian citizens). Another 12.15% of other foreigners are employed in private homes, a sector that is nearly absent from data on Greek (only 0.34%) and Albanian (only 1.84%) citizens. It is worth noting that Albanian workers account for nearly one-third of all workers employed in the construction sector, while Greeks account for just under the two-thirds of workers in this sector.

Looking at the data of the National Welfare Institute (IKA) regarding the declared profession of insured workers, we note again a significant difference in the pattern of distribution across Greek, Albanian and other foreign citizens (non-EU 25). About one-quarter of Greek workers (24%) possess clerical jobs, and 17% are salespersons (including both shops and open air markets). Only 18% of Greek workers are employed as unskilled manual workers and skilled crafts workers. Among Albanians, the rate for unskilled and semi skilled manual jobs is 70% and among other foreigners is approximately 60%. About 8% of Albanians and 10% of other foreigners are employed as skilled craftsmen, while 13% of Albanians and 15% of other foreigners are employed as salespersons (including both shops and open air markets). In other words, in the sales professions, the participation of foreign workers approximates that of Greek citizens.

In the sections below we consider four groups of immigrations: the first group is the Albanian citizens, which constitute the largest national group within the immigrant populations. The second one is the co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union, another large group for which we have sufficient data and which is in a different position than the Albanians, since they received citizenship upon arrival in Greece in the early 1990s. The third one includes citizens

of countries that have recently joined the EU. Finally, for the purposes of this paper, we group together migrants from Eastern European countries (e.g., Ukraine) and those from developing countries (mainly Asia and Africa).

4.1 Albanians

One-fifth of the Albanian population left the country after the changes in the early 1990s. This fact puts the country internationally on the first place among all countries in transition economy, because of the fact that so many people migrated out of her borders – mostly to Italy or Greece (Castaldo, Litchfield and Reilly, 2005). Greece, on the other side, as a state that accepted numerous Albanians, also stepped at the first place in the EU, being the only country where one immigrant group accounts for more than 50% of the total immigrant population.

A survey of 500 Albanian immigrants conducted by Lambrianidis and Lyberaki in Thessalonike (Lambrianidis and Lyberaki, 2001) show that Albanian workers in the second largest city of Greece have moved from unskilled farm work in the early and mid 1990s into construction, small firm employment, semi-skilled work and transport services. The authors highlight the upward socio-economic mobility of Albanian immigrants who through increased language skills and a better understanding of employment possibilities in Greek society, managed to improve their employment situation and income. It is also worth noting that in the period covered by the research, the first regularisation programme took place thus enabling immigrant workers to obtain legal status and hence to enjoy insurance benefits. Among the sample studied by Lambrianidis and Lymperaki, 82% declared to hold steady employment and 57% paid social insurance. About one-third of men interviewed worked in construction and one-third of women in house cleaning. Among women another third were housewives while among men, 24% worked in small industries. These findings are confirmed by Hatziprokopiou (2003) who shows that Albanian immigrants in Thessalonike apart from construction and domestic services are employed in small enterprises (commerce, transportation, hotels and restaurants) and in small and medium-scale manufacturing. Contrary also to earlier studies (Iosifides and King 1998), Hatziprokopiou notes that at the time of his interviews, most interviewees had legal status and social insurance. Lyberaki and Maroukis (2004) also show that Albanian women are progressively moving out from unskilled agricultural work and cleaning services to become housewives, if they can afford it.

4.2 Co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union

Pontic Greeks as co-ethnic migrants from the former Soviet Republics are called appeared in Greece at the end of the 1980s. The peak of their flow was in the early 1990s. Pontic Greeks were citizens of the former republics of the Soviet Union who declared an ethnic Greek origin, and on that base were given Greek citizenship. According to data of the Directorate of the Returnees, in 2000 there were 155,319 Pontic Greeks in the country (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000)

Despite the fact that the returnees have Greek citizenship and, also, that their education level is higher than that of native Greeks¹⁷, the returnees faced serious problems in finding jobs,

¹⁷ This becomes apparent by comparing the educational level of the Greek population according to the data of the census of 2001 for people over six years old with the data from the census of the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co Ethnics, conducted in 2000 (p. 64). For example 10% of the repatriated co-ethnics have

mainly because they did not speak Greek at a good level, but also because the state did not recognise their educational diplomas. The unemployment rates among them rose. Moreover, underemployment was noticed. The highest percentage of returnees worked as unskilled workers. Other common occupations were those of constructors, cleaners and – especially for women – housekeeping (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000).

Contrary to the Albanians (who arrived with no skills and managed to integrate in the labour market, to open their own enterprises and to develop professional skills, thus climbing professionally and financially) the returnees from the former Soviet Union got trapped into works with lower financial benefits and social status, despite the good education they had and the cultural bonds with Greece.

4.3 EU Citizens from new member states

Two of the largest immigrant groups in Greece come from the two new member states that joined the EU in 2007, notably Bulgaria and Romania. These two groups go through a transition period in terms of their status in Greece as they can take advantage of EU citizen rights but may not access freely the Greek labour market. Polish citizens have found themselves in a similar situation in the period 2004-2006 but enjoy now full EU citizenship status and free access to the Greek labour market. These changes in legal and political status do not automatically imply that citizens from these countries no longer face discrimination or exploitation in the workplace. It is therefore important to take a closer look at their participation in the domestic labour market.

4.3.1 Bulgarians

Nearly three-quarters of Bulgarian immigrants in Greece are women. Their most common first occupation is as live-in maids, while men, upon their arrival, are usually employed as untrained workers, mostly in construction. They are not a particularly young cohort: one-third of them is in the 30-39 age group and another third is in the 40-49 age group (Markova 2007). Until 1998 and the first regularization program, the vast majority of Bulgarian immigrants resided in Greece illegally and held informal jobs, without welfare insurance and with significantly lower wages than natives. After the regularization of 1998, a significant number of Bulgarian immigrants managed to improve their employment status and obtain regular jobs with welfare insurance. Many, however, continued to suffer from exploitative and informal employment conditions: employers paid only part of their due welfare contributions, and migrants ended up not satisfying the welfare stamps requirement when the time came to renew their permits (Markova 2007).

Based on the data of the 2001 census, the Bulgarians who resided in Greece numbered 35,104. Sixty percent of them were women while 79% of their total number had come to Greece in search of an occupation. Data of the Ministry of Public Order and the Headquarters of the Greek Police show that in April of 2008 there were almost 30,000 Bulgarians residing in Greece legally. According to the last available data in December 2006, approximately 14,000 Bulgarians were insured by the IKA and, according to the same data, the average wage of a Bulgarian working in a common enterprise was 45% lower than that of Greek workers, though in the construction sector the difference was considerably smaller (17%).

graduated from a Technological Educational Institute while the correspondent percentage for Greeks is 3%. Also 12% are University graduates while the correspondent percentage for Greeks is 8%.

4.3.2 Romanians

According to the 2001 census, there were approximately 22,000 Romanians residing in Greece at the time. According to data from the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Greek Police Headquarters, the number of valid residence permits for Romanian citizens in April 2008 was over 19,000. The latest data from the National Insurance Institute (IKA) show that almost 13,000 Romanians were insured by that organization in December 2006 and their average wage, for sectors other than construction, was 33% lower than that of Greek workers.

4.3.3 Poles

In 2001, according to the census of the National Statistical Service, almost 13,000 Polish citizens resided in Greece and 60% of them came to the country with the purpose of working. Based on data of the Ministry of Interior and the Greek Police, in April of 2008 the number of Polish citizens residing legally in the country was barely over 7,500. In December of 2006, nearly 4,500 Polish workers were insured by the IKA, but their average wage was 30% lower than that of a Greek worker for those employed in common enterprises and 14% lower for those working in construction. Although the number of registered Polish citizens is low, it is estimated that the Polish community in Athens numbers some 50,000 members who are rather well-integrated in Greek society and in the economy. A large part of the community lives in the centre of Athens, near the Polish church (in Vathis square and surrounding area) while other, small groups of Poles are also scattered in all Athens' neighbourhoods. The community is well-organised and networks have developed around community institutions, notably the church and the Polish school funded by the Polish state, with more than 1,000 pupils (Christou 2008).

4.4 Eastern Europeans and Asians

Both Eastern European and Asian communities are characterised by important gender imbalances. One main characteristic of the migration from the Philippines, Ukraine and Russia, is that 80% of each group's total number consists of women. Most of them are live-in maids and care-givers. It is important to note that the women from Albania who work as live-in maids comprise less than 2% of the women of all ethnic groups. The opposite gender imbalance is found among certain Asian groups. The Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Syrian and Egyptian communities mainly comprise males (at a level of nearly 90%).

The influx of Asian immigrants in Greece started about three decades ago with the arrival of Pakistani and Filipino immigrants, followed by Indians, Chinese and Bangladeshis. After 2003 there was a significant increase in the number of Asian immigrants in Greece, and new communities have been created. It is estimated that more than 130,000 Asians currently live in Greece and that most of them occupy low-paid positions that do not require training (Tonchev, 2007:3).

Table 4.1: Asian Immigrants in Greece

Main Groups	Census 2001	Percentage of Men	Permits (April 2008)	Estimated Number*	Main Occupations
Pakistanis	11,130	96%	12,126	40,000-50,000	Industries Constructions Services
Bangladeshis	4,854	97%	4,682	12,000	Small Shops Restaurants
Filipinos	6,478	24%	6,644	20,000	Domestic Workers
Indians	7,216	93%	9,104	12,000-15,000	Agriculture Fishery

Sources: National Statistical Service of Greece, Census 2001(number for 2001 and percentage of men)
 Ministry of the Interior (Valid permits in April 2008)
 Tonchev, 2007: 17 (Estimated numbers and main occupations)

4.4.1 Ukrainians

Based on data from the last census, in 2001 the number of Ukrainians residing in Greece was approximately 13,500 people, 75% of which were women. The data obtained from the Ministry of the Interior show that the number of valid residence permits for Ukrainian citizens in April 2008 was almost 17,500. The latest data from the IKA show that a much lower number (approx. 3,000) of Ukrainian citizens were registered as dependent employees by the organization in 2006 and their average wage was almost half of that of Greek workers (48% lower). Since there is a large proportion of Ukrainian women that work as live-in maids, it is highly likely that a large number of them remain undocumented and/or uninsured.

4.4.2 Pakistanis and Bangladeshis

The influx of Pakistani immigrants began during the 1970s, after a bilateral agreement between Greece and Pakistan, in order for them to work in the shipyards of Skaramangas, but their population augmented significantly during the period between 1991 and 2003. According to the 2001 census the Pakistani community of Greece numbered more than 11,000, 92% of which came to Greece in search of employment. According to the same census, 96% of the Pakistanis in Greece were men who work mostly in manufacturing industries but also in the fields of construction and services.

Based on data of the Ministry of the Interior, more than 11,000 Pakistanis resided legally in Greece in April of 2008. Interestingly, about 13,000 Pakistanis were insured by the IKA in December of 2006, according to the IKA's own data. However, data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) concerning the first trimester of 2006 indicate that there were more than 15,000 people. Nonetheless, a recent study (Tonchev 2007: 17) estimates their actual number between 40,000 and 50,000.

Bangladeshis are a more recent community since they began migrating to Greece after 1991. Based on the data of the last census of the National Statistical Service, 94% of about 5,000 migrants from Bangladesh who resided in Greece in 2001 came with the purpose of working and were mostly employed in small shops and restaurants while 97% of them were men.

Data obtained from the Ministry of Interior show that more than 3,500 Bangladeshis resided legally in Greece in April 2008. Furthermore, according to data from IKA for December 2006, approximately 3,500 Bangladeshis were insured by this organisation while the average

wage of a Bangladeshi worker was 41% lower than that of the average Greek worker. Tonchev (2007: 17) estimates that there are at least 12,000 Bangladeshis currently living in Athens, employed mostly in the catering sector (restaurants in central Athens).

4.4.3 Filipinos

Women from the Philippines started migrating to Greece at the end of the 1970s in order to be employed in hotels and hospitals but also as live-in maids. There has been an increase in their population since 1991, and their most common occupation is as domestic workers. There were 6,500 Filipinos registered at the time of the 2001 census, 76% of which were women. Moreover, 80% of the Filipinos residing in Greece migrated with the purpose of working and 77% of those who came in order to work lived in Greece for more than five years, at the time of the census.

According to data from the IKA and data from the Ministry of the Interior, there were over 6,500 Filipinos residing legally in Greece in April 2008, although there are other estimates that the Filipino community numbers approximately 20,000 people (Tonchev, 2007:17). More than 4,000 Filipinos were insured by the IKA in December 2006, while the average wage of a Filipino worker was less than half of the average wage for a Greek worker (59% lower).

4.4.4 Indians

A small number of Indians resided in Greece before 1991, but their population increased after that year. Their majority is working in agriculture and fishery (Tonchev, 2007:15 and 18). According to data from the 2001 census, more than 7,000 Indians resided in Greece. Nearly all of them (93%) were males and 92% of them had migrated for work purposes. Data from the Ministry of the Interior show that more than 8,500 Indians resided legally in Greece in April 2008. In addition, data from the IKA show that more than 5,000 Indians were insured by the organisation in December 2006.

4.5 Ethnic business development

A small percentage of immigrants in Greece run their own businesses. It is difficult to get information for the whole country, and data from the Welfare fund for professionals (OAEE) are unreliable (Zografakis et al. 2007), but according to the Chamber of Commerce in Athens each ethnic group is specialized and strongly represented in a specific type of business. The data of the Chamber of Commerce in Athens for the year 2006 indicate that Albanians are the most active in starting a business. Most of them run corner shops or kiosks. Immigrants from Asia – Pakistan, Bangladesh and India – run food shops as well as video clubs (mainly Indians and Pakistanis).

The Chinese in Greece are usually merchants and have retail stores selling clothes and other goods. Tonchev estimates the Chinese community in Greece at approximately 20,000 people, that is, 15 times larger than the approximately 1,500 Chinese registered at the 2001 census (Tonchev 2007: 17). About one-half of the Chinese community is settled in Athens and works in self-owned stores while a few thousand Chinese move to the islands during the summer months to take advantage of the trade opportunities there (Tonchev, 2007: 17).

In absolute numbers, Albanians constitute the most active nationality with more than 2,000 businesses registered with the Chamber of Commerce. Egyptians and Cypriots come second with more than 200 businesses each. Close after them follow Pakistanis and Syrians. In relative numbers, though, Asians are much more business-oriented than Albanians or other

Eastern European groups. Comparing the number of ethnic businesses run by Asians in the Athens area with the actual size of these groups (several tens of thousands), shows that they are the most entrepreneurial nationalities. Bulgarians, Romanians and Ukrainians are under-represented among business owners despite the relatively large size of these communities.

4.6 An assessment of migrant insertion into the Greek labour market

The overview of the data and estimates presented above suggests a mixed picture of the evolution of migrant stocks and their insertion into the labour market. Data on regular migrants suggest that, regardless of nationality, a significant percentage (ranging between two-thirds and three-fourths) of legal immigrants hold welfare insurance and hence a regular job. By contrast, estimates based on qualitative fieldwork or on small-scale surveys suggest that there is a large number of people, especially in the numerically smaller communities from non-EU countries, that live and work without documents. There is a scarcity of data or of earlier studies that would help in assessing the socio-economic and professional mobility of Asian and Eastern European populations as there is only one, for the most part, descriptive study on Asian immigrants in Athens (Tonchev 2007) and there is no study, to the best of our knowledge, on Ukrainian or Romanian immigration in Greece.

By contrast, there is a wealth of studies concentrating on Albanian citizens. These studies suggest that Albanian immigration has largely emerged from illegality to regular employment and legal stay. Their participation in welfare schemes has increased and they have achieved upwards socio-economic and professional mobility. This is particularly the case for Albanian men, while Albanian women appear trapped in the three-C sector (cleaning, catering and care-giving), with mainly informal employment conditions.

Regarding the sectors of immigrant participation in the labour market, dependent employment is clearly the norm, with very little incidence of ethnic businesses among the largest migrant groups from Eastern Europe. By contrast, Asian migrants are comparatively much more active in setting up small businesses. On the other hand, while a certain level of ethnicisation of the labour market persists with specific groups occupying specific niches (e.g., Chinese retail stores and trade, Bangladeshis in restaurants, Indians and Pakistanis in construction and other manual work as well as in corner shops, Ukrainians and Bulgarians as live-in maids, while Albanian women only as external domestic helpers and care-givers). Albanian and Bulgarian men tend to move out of unskilled manual to semi-skilled or skilled manual work as well as to trade, services and small businesses.

Overall, the data obtained from the IKA on waged labourers show a significant inequality between the wages of different nationalities. Foreign workers receive wages that are between 30% and 50% lower than those of Greeks for general waged work and services. However, this inequality is significantly lower (between 6% and 15%) when it comes to the construction sector. It is also noteworthy that inequality similarly affects citizens of larger immigrant groups who come from neighbouring countries, citizens of Eastern European countries and citizens of Asian countries with no previous cultural or historical ties to Greece. Thus, it appears that discrimination and inequality is structured along the axis of Greek/non-Greek rather than depending on the specific nationality of the worker. Naturally, this hypothesis needs further testing. Additionally, the pattern of wage inequality suggests that in the ethnicised sectors of the labour market such as construction, discrimination and inequality in wages is lower, showing that there is probably a higher need for immigrant work and a better insertion of migrant labourers into these sectors.

The picture is not particularly promising as immigrants, at least those of the first generation, appear trapped in the low-skill, low-pay sectors of the labour market. The following section discusses the main tenets of Greek immigration management and control policy during the past 15 years, with an aim to explain why migrants in Greece find it difficult to find and keep a regular job, even after several years of residence in the country (see also Markova 2007, comparing Spain and Greece on this aspect).

5. The evolution of immigration policies in Greece during the past 15 years

Our outline of the immigrant stock in Greece and of the employment patterns of different national groups suggests that immigration has acquired the character of a long-term phenomenon in Greece. Immigrants have settled in the country and contribute significantly to the labour market, the national economy, and the welfare system while they also slowly emerge as users of health, education and other social services. It took the Greek authorities nearly 15 years, however, to realise that migration policy planning should view migration as a long-term and multi-faceted phenomenon that needed appropriate management and integration policies, rather than temporary emergency measures to be dealt with. In this section we present and comment upon the main migration policy measures adopted by Greek governments since 1991, thereby providing the background for discussing current challenges and implementation problems in Sections 5-8 further below.

Just prior the 1990s, when immigrant flows started, Greece lacked a legislative frame for the control and management of immigration.¹⁸ The increasing migratory pressures of the late 1980s led to the design of law 1975/1991, which was enacted by the Greek Parliament in October 1991, formally applied in June 1992 and which remained in force until 2001. This law was exclusively concerned with restricting migration. Its title actually was: 'Entry-exit, sojourn, employment, deportation of aliens, procedure for the recognition of alien refugees and other provisions'. Its main objectives were to prevent the entrance of undocumented immigrants and to facilitate the expulsion of those already present in Greek territory, by means of simplifying the expulsion procedures, giving a certain degree of autonomy to local police and judiciary authorities and also penalising illegal alien stay in the country. The law was aimed at bringing Greece into line with its European partners, co-signatories of the 1990 Dublin convention (ratified by Greece by law 1996/1991) and the members of the 1990 Schengen treaty, to which Greece was accorded observer status at the time.

More specifically, a maximum time-period was set for residence and work permits regarding certain types of employment, granted by the authorities (article 23), along with a list naming categories of 'unwanted aliens' (article 11). A special police force was established to maintain effective border control and regulate deportations (article 5). The conditions for recognition of refugee status were made stricter (article 24), and sanctions were imposed on those who employed foreign workers without permission or who helped them in any way to cross the border (article 23). Moreover, the law defined as a *criminal* action the entrance and stay of any alien in Greece without documents and residence permits, and legalized, in this manner, deportations and expulsions even in the transit zones (article 27). According to that law, undocumented immigrants, in order to obtain residence and work permits, had to demonstrate to the authorities within one month of entering the country, that they had a potential work contract with a specific employer for a given period of time (article 23). Additionally, the law required that the employment of non-nationals was allowed only when the job vacancy could not be filled by Greek citizens or EU nationals, in which case the Ministry of Labour would grant work permits for the specific employment in question, only before the arrival of the foreign employees in Greece (article 22). The law allowed administrative authorities a certain degree of discretion in the enforcement of its provisions. For example, the specific police unit set up to patrol the borders was given the power to decide ad hoc who would or would not get permission for entry (article 4, § 2, 7).

¹⁸ Law 4310 of 1929, revised in 1948, mainly dealt with issues of emigration.

Non-governmental organisations and scholars strongly criticized law 1975/1991, among other things, for being out of touch with reality: it ignored the de facto presence of several tens of thousands of foreigners in Greece. Indeed, the aim of that law was mainly to curb migration, to facilitate removals of undocumented migrants apprehended near the borders and, if that were possible, to remove all illegal aliens sojourning in Greece. The law made nearly impracticable the entry and stay of economic migrants, seeking jobs.

In the years that followed, hundreds of thousands of immigrants came to Greece without documents, or permits.¹⁹ They crossed the northern mountainous borders between Albania or Bulgaria and Greece on foot at night, or landed in small dinghies on the Greek islands of the Aegean or Crete (usually with the 'help' of human smuggling networks). Some arrived at Greek airports with tourist visas which they overstayed, and others crossed the northern Greek borders by bus, pretending that they were travelling for leisure. It took more than five years for the Greek government to realise that these immigrants were there to stay and the new phenomenon could not only be managed through stricter border control and massive removal operations.

The presidential decrees 358/1997 and 359/1997 inaugurated the first immigrant regularisation programme, which took place in spring of 1998. In total, 371,641 immigrants applied for the white card (limited duration permit) which was the first step in applying for the temporary stay permit or green card (of 1, 2 or 5 year duration). Only 212,860 undocumented foreigners managed to submit an application for a green card. The main reason for this was that, while this first regularisation programme was ambitious in its conception and rather open in its conditions, it met with insurmountable organisational and practical difficulties. For one, the state services responsible for managing the programme were hardly prepared to receive and process the hundreds of thousands of applications.²⁰ In addition, proof of legal employment for a minimum number of days was an important prerequisite; the reluctance of many employers to pay social insurance contributions made it very difficult for many applicants to meet this requirement. As a result, a significant number of applications were unsuccessful in passing to the second but necessary phase of the green card application phase and, despite the repeated extensions of the deadlines, presumably fell back into undocumented status. Nonetheless, this programme laid the first foundations in Greece for an institutional framework formulated specifically to deal with immigration. In addition, the data collected through the regularisation procedure offered some first insights to the socio-economic and demographic features of the immigrant population (see Cavounidis 2002, Lianos 2001).

¹⁹ According to SOPEMI (1999), in 1997 there were 74.500 legal migrants in Greece, of whom 6% were Albanians, 8% Bulgarians and 17% Russians (Romanians, Egyptians, Ukrainians and citizens from former Yugoslavia accounted for approx. 4% each). These data include co-ethnic returnees (Pontic Greeks). During the same period, several researchers estimated that there were approximately 400,000 undocumented immigrants living and working in Greece (Fakiolas 1997; Greek Helsinki Monitor 1995; Katsoridas 1996; Lianos *et al.* 1996; Linardos Rylmond 1995; Petrinioti 1993; Triandafyllidou and Mikrakis 1995; Triandafyllidou 1996).

²⁰ The main weaknesses of the programme had to do with the inability of the Greek hospitals to examine thousands of applicants so that they would receive the 'good health' certificates necessary for their applications. Also, the Ministry of Justice was unable to issue, in such a short time, criminal record certificates to the thousands of applicants. On top of this, the Employment Institute (OAED) responsible for managing the programme suffered from staff shortages. The temporary personnel eventually hired did not have the necessary training to perform their tasks efficiently and transparently. The whole process suffered from severe ideological and ethnic bias (and sometimes outright corruption) that conditioned decisions on the eligibility of applicants (Mpagavos, Papadopoulou 2003; Psimmenos and Kassimati 2002).

In 2001, and before the first regularisation programme had come to a close, the government issued a new law (law 2910/2001) entitled 'Entry and sojourn of foreigners into the Greek territory, naturalisation and other measures'. This law had a twofold aim. First, it included a second regularisation programme that aimed at attracting all the applicants who had not been able to benefit from the 1998 'amnesty' as well as the thousands of new immigrants who had, in the meantime, arrived in Greece. Second, the new law created the necessary policy framework to deal with immigration in the medium to long term. Thus, it provided not only for issues relating to border control but also for channels of legal entry to Greece for employment, family reunion, return to their country of origin (for ethnic Greeks abroad), and also studies or asylum seeking. It also laid down the conditions for the naturalisation of aliens residing in the country.

Another 362,000 immigrants applied to acquire legal status within the framework of the new programme. Even though the implementation phase had been more carefully planned, organisational issues arose quickly. In the Athens metropolitan area in particular, the four special immigration offices set up by the regional government to receive and process the applications were completely unable to deal with the huge workload they were faced with. Following repeated recommendations by trade unions, NGOs, and the Greek Ombudsman²¹, the law was revised and the relevant deadlines extended. Nonetheless, resources were still insufficient as work and stay permits continued to be issued for one-year periods only. Hence, by the time one immigrant was done with the issuing of her/his papers, s/he had to start all over again to renew it. In addition to the cumbersome nature of the procedure, the costs (in money but also in time spent queuing) associated with this renewal process that are incurred by the migrants constituted a further hindrance. Only in January 2004 (Act 3202/2003) did the government decide to issue permits of a two-year duration, thereby facilitating the task of both the administration and the immigrant applicants.

Law 2910/2001 established a complex administrative procedure for the issuing of stay permits with the purpose of employment or studies. During the last trimester of each year, according to the law (article 19), the Organisation for the Employment of the Labour Force (OAED) would issue a plan outlining the domestic labour market's needs. OAED would verify the need for workers in specific sectors and areas and would forward the relevant data to the Greek consular authorities. Interested foreign citizens would then be able to apply at their local consulates and register for the advertised types of work. At the same time, Greek employers who were interested in hiring a foreign worker would apply to their local prefecture (nomarchia). Subsequently, the employer would choose people by name from the lists that, in the meantime, would have been sent by the consular authorities to prefectures. A prefecture would then issue and send, under certain conditions, the work invitation to a specific foreign citizen in his/her country of origin and the foreign citizen would then be able to secure a visa for work purposes. The new migrant would have to produce a new series of documents upon arrival to Greece so as to secure a work permit (that would replace his/her work visa) and a stay permit, conditional upon obtaining the former.

The procedure for acquiring a residence permit with the purpose of studying was similar to the one detailed above. Every year, the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs determined, by department and sector, the number of foreign students who could enter Greece in order to study. Based on the relevant report of the Ministry, those who were interested

²¹ See special report for law 2910/2001, submitted to the Minister of Interior in December 2001, <http://www.synigoros.gr/porismata.htm#>

applied for a visa to their local consulates and followed a procedure similar to the one described above.

The logic of the two cases discussed above was the same, despite the fact that the procedures differed as to the specific documents that needed to be submitted. It is obvious that, although the above procedure is completely logical, it was supported by a series of time-consuming and costly (for the Greek state, the consulate authorities, the Greek employers and the foreign workers) administrative actions. Moreover, the coordination of the whole procedure is, in our opinion, unfeasible because it is based on a series of acceptances (that all the steps are going to be accomplished correctly and in a short period of time) that are not realistic. The law emphasized the lawful character of the procedure and neglected its essence: the needs of the local labor market, the importance of filling vacant places in due time in order to maintain the viability and the competition of the businesses and, finally, the fact that many immigrants, pressed by poverty or political oppression, will try to migrate illegally.

Indeed, although the situation has progressively improved since 2001, in practice immigrants often receive their permit after it has expired. Therefore, they end up applying for renewal when they obtain it or sometimes even before they receive it. This situation leads to a condition of ambiguous 'legality' for migrants who are de facto obliged to have, as their only documentation, the receipt of the application of issuing or renewing their residence permit, but not their actual permit. This situation runs counter to the principles of a fair public administration since the foreigners have to pay a high fee (145 Euros) for the issuing/ renewal of their permit, which they never actually get to benefit from due to the enormous delays.

This type of economic migration management policy is completely inefficient in the Greek environment. In economies like Greece, where immigrants are occupied in small and medium enterprises, small family businesses and households, the demand meets supply through social networks and personal acquaintances. It is therefore nearly impossible for the immigrants and their prospective employers to follow the legal procedure described above. As a result, the informal networks keep functioning,²² immigrants keep coming to Greece – in many cases illegally – and, those who already reside in the country continue to stay and work there with or without renewed permits and, finally, the responsible state authorities do not know where to end migration control and where to start managing migration.

Nonetheless, 2001 may be considered a turning point for the development of Greek migration policy. Not only was the first comprehensive migration law voted on in Parliament, but it was also the first time that the government carried out a three-year action plan for immigrant integration (2002-2005) supported by the European Social Fund and the European Commission. This plan included measures for improving and facilitating migrants' insertion into the labour market, addressed issues of health care and introduced measures combating racism and xenophobia in Greek society (see http://www.ypergka.gr/index_gr.html). Unfortunately, most of these measures remained only on paper.

On 23 August 2005 the government voted on a new law (law 3386/2005) that regulates migratory matters and incorporates the EU Directives 2003/86 (on the right to family reunification) and 2003/109 (on the status of long-term residents) to the national legal order. This law has been in force since 1.1.2006 but was modified in February 2007 by law 3536/2007.

²² The function of social networks in the search of employment is also recognized by Ambrosini (2001) in the case of Italy that is, to a point, similar to the one of Greece.

Both acts (3386/2005 and 3536/2007) include new regularisation programmes. Article 91 of law 3386/2005 introduced a regularisation programme for undocumented migrants who had entered Greece before 31 December 2004. Law 3536/2007, article 18 introduced a new, smaller regularisation programme enabling those who had not been able to renew their permits, according to 3386, in time and those who were not able to collect the necessary insurance stamps. Thus the aim of these two programs (the second one ended on 30 September 2007) has been to incorporate into legal status certain, specific categories of immigrants who had lived in Greece for several years (the date by which the foreigner had to have come to Greece remained 31 December 2004) but who, for various reasons, had not been able to legitimize their residence and employment in the country.

Act 3386/2005 regulates matters of entry, stay and social integration of third country nationals in Greece. EU citizens, refugees and asylum seekers are excluded from its field of effect. The new law abolishes the existence of separate work and stay permits and introduces a stay permit for different purposes (e.g., for work, study, family reunification, as well as a variety of special reasons, article 9 of the law). The application fee of 150 euros for issuing a residence permit with a one-year duration remains, but the fee rose to 300 euros and 450 euros for permits with two- and three-year periods of duration, correspondingly. As a result of protests by immigrant organizations and other institutions, this provision was amended so that dependent family members did not have to pay the fee.

It is worth noting that the work-load required to issue a permit for the Greek administration is the same (or almost the same) regardless of the duration of the permit. Therefore the application fee of 150 euros per year constitutes an 'additional tax' for the applying foreign citizens. The increase of the fee is all the more provocative if one considers the huge delays in issuing/renewing residence permits during the effect of the law 2910/2001 which, to a certain extent, continue today. According to sources in the Ministry of Interior Affairs (Int.2), the delays have been reduced in certain municipalities but, despite that, issuing or renewing a permit in three months is considered a record!

Law 3386/2005 introduces a stay permit for financial investment activities (articles 26-27) which refers to people who are willing to invest a capital of at least 300,000 euros in Greece. The permit for independent financial activity is defined separately (articles 24-25, and requires a minimum investment of 60,000 euros) and so is the residence permit for employees of companies of another EU member or a third country who are moved to Greece for a limited period of time in order to offer specific services within the frameworks of their employment for their company. Moreover, the law determines the condition for issuing residence permits for a series of other categories (such as athletes and trainers, intellectuals and artists, financially independent people, practitioners of known religions, scientific researchers, tour guides, students in Athoniada school in Athos etc.). It is also very important that the new law has special provisions for the protection of human trafficking victims (articles 46-52).

Stay permits issued for study purposes (article 28-29) include a time limitation: the total duration of the study increased by half, plus one year for learning the language. The law indirectly emphasizes the development of the education sector and vocational training in Greece because it recognizes all the relevant public and private institutions of higher and professional education. In addition, it does not set a maximum yearly limit of residence permits to be issued for this reason. It also establishes the possibility for foreign students to work part-time (article 35).

Articles 53-60 of law 3386/2005 determine the right and the procedure to family reunification by incorporating the relevant EU directive to the Greek legal order. Law 3536/2007 waives the application fee for the stay permits of under-age children. Articles 67-69 incorporate the EU directive for the status of long-term residents into the Greek legal order. A basic knowledge of the Greek language and of Greek history and culture are among the preconditions for acquiring this status. The original Presidential Decree that determined the details for the certification of Greek language knowledge was particularly restrictive (it only accepted high-school diplomas or a certificate of special courses that the Ministry would found specifically for the status of long-term residents, but did not recognize, for example, the degrees from Greek Universities and Technological Education Institutes or other state language departments) and was heavily criticized by NGOs and immigrant associations. Finally, a new ministerial decree was issued in November 2007 that simplified the procedure of proving one's fluency in Greek and of one's knowledge of Greek history and culture.

Finally, articles 65 and 66 introduce a Complete Action Plan for the social integration of immigrants based on the respect of their fundamental rights and with the purpose of their successful integration into the Greek society, emphasizing the following sectors: certified knowledge of the Greek language, completing introductory courses on Greek history, culture and the Greek way of life, integration to the Greek labor market and active social participation (article 66, paragraph 4). This program has, so far, remained on paper apart from some actions, funded by the community program EQUAL. Our research interview with the Ministry of the Interior, the Social Integration Directorate (Int.12) in December 2007, however, suggests that there is now a renewed interest and political will on the part of the relevant Ministry to put into action a wide national programme (called ESTIA, which literally in ancient Greek means *home*) that will bring together state and non-state actors in a variety of actions aimed at promoting the social, cultural and economic integration of migrants in Greek society. It is likely, however, that the re-organisation of the relevant Social Integration department into a Social Integration Directorate was affected by the creation of the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals in the summer of 2007.²³

Act 3386/2005 also regulates reasons for revoking a residence permit and the procedure of administrative deportation (see particularly article 76). It is worth noting that, unfortunately, this law continues to prohibit (article 84) Greek public services, legal entities, organizations of local government, organizations of public utility and organizations of social security to offer services to foreigners who are 'unable to prove that they have entered and are residing in the country legally.' The only exception to this prohibition is hospitals in emergency cases and in cases of offering health care to minors (under 18 years of age). Children's access to the public education system is regulated by law 2910/2001, regardless of their parents' legal status.

Following this critical overview of the development of Greek immigration policy in the past 15 years, we discuss below the current circumstances in four main areas of migration policy, namely:

- migration control at the borders and in the interior of the country;
- migration management through the issuing and renewal of stay permits;
- migrant labour management through the procedure of 'metaklisi'; And
- migrant integration policies in general.

²³ 12.06.2007 [2007/435/EC: Council Decision of 25 June 2007 establishing the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows](#), *Official Journal L 168*, 28.06.2007, p. 18-36

6. Migration Control

6.1 Controls at the Border

Throughout the last 20 years, a major challenge for migration policy in Greece has been the control of the country's northern land borders and eastern and southeastern sea borders. It took more than a decade for Greek authorities to realise that 'you cannot guard a border on your own. You need the cooperation of the other side' (Int.3). In 1998, the Border Guard Force (*Synoriofylaki*) was established. Their aim was to identify, arrest and send back irregular migrants. The Border Guard Forces do not only operate in prefectures that are near the borders but also in prefectures that receive a large number of illegal immigrants.²⁴ Border Guard forces are currently (November 2007, Int. 3) staffed by 4,600 border guards and 500 police officers. Border guards are not police officers. They belong to a special force of the police and are usually people who served in the Greek Marine corps in fulfilment of their military service. Their training is thus, in a way, partial – by comparison to the training of police officers who graduated from the police academy after completing their high school studies – and their duties are limited and much more focused: they have to locate irregular immigrants and bring them to justice or deport them.

In the period between 2003 and 2005, there were approximately 50,000 irregular migrants arrested either at the border or within the Greek territory. Numbers have increased since 2005, when there were more than 66,000 arrests, rising further to 95,000 in 2006 and to nearly 70,000 for the first eight months of 2007. However, it is unclear whether the rising numbers reflect an increase in the number of people seeking to cross the Greek borders illegally, an increase in the numbers of people who reside in Greece illegally or indeed an intensification of the enforcement efforts of the border guard forces both at the border and within the country. It is worth noting that numbers have increased for all three categories (illegal entries by sea, land and undocumented aliens apprehended within the country) (see Chart 6.6 below). Our contextual knowledge of Greek reality suggests that efforts for apprehensions at the sea borders may have increased, given Greece's overall effort to argue in favour of the creation of a European sea patrol force. Efforts at the land border may have been constant during this period, while efforts in the inland are likely to have been reduced during the past three years since, as a Ministry of Interior official also suggested, when there are regularisation programmes in progress, internal controls become rarer since it is understood that there are people who are illegally in the country and who are in the process of regularising their status (Int. 2).

Figure 6.1: Aliens apprehended at the border or in the inland

Year	Land Border	Sea Border	Within the Border	Total
2003	28,358	4,098	18,575	51,031
2004	23,221	5,926	15,840	44,987
2005	37,867	4,974	23,510	66,351
2006	53,556	9,049	32,634	95,239
(Jan-Aug) 2007	42,980	9,000	17,865	69,845

Source: Ministry of Interior, Police Command Office, Branch of Security and Order, Aliens' Directorate, 4th department, 15 October 2007.

* Data for 2007 refer to the period January to August 2007.

²⁴ <http://www.ydt.gr/main/Section.jsp?SectionID=940&LanguageID=2>

A better understanding of the pathways of migration through illegal entry, however, requires distinguishing between two main routes: the Turkey-Greece path through the sea border of the Aegean or through the northeastern land border along the Evros River, and the Balkans-Greece path along the northern land border, which has been, numerically, the most heavily trafficked zone during the 1990s.

6.1.1 The Turkey-Greece irregular migration path

The main irregular migration route from Asia to Europe goes through Turkey into Greece, crossing the narrow straits that divide mainland Turkey from several of the Greek islands of the Aegean (e.g. Mytilini (Lesvos) or Chios) or the Evros River on the northeastern part of the border in Thrace, on small boats. They cross at night, often accompanied by the smugglers that hide among their customers. When crossing the Evros River, smugglers usually give them instructions and leave them to their own devices. They do not risk being caught along the heavily-guarded Greek-Turkish border in Thrace or falling into a mine field. There have been many tragic reports of smuggled migrants who lost their lives on a minefield trying to cross the border (Papadopoulou 2004; Antonopoulos and Winterdyk 2006). Smuggled migrants, more often than, not are intercepted by the Greek coastguard or border guard and are brought to local detention centres. They are provided first aid, go through health controls and are initially interrogated by specialised coastguard or police officers with the goal of establishing where they come from and who the smugglers are, among them.

It is not uncommon that irregular migrants who try to cross the Turkey-EU sea border hide their identity in an attempt to avoid being returned to their country of origin. After the pre-interrogation phase, smugglers are prosecuted while migrants spend up to three months in the detention centres while the Ministry tries to establish their identity through correspondence with the countries of origin or transit (Kanellopoulos et al. 2006: 58-59, Int. 1). They may, however, object to their detention (using the services of a lawyer) and hence be left free with a deportation order requiring them to leave the country within 30 days. Even in the event of a three-month period of detention, if the police authorities have not been able to establish their identity and either repatriate them or return them to the last transit country they traversed (in this case Turkey), they are obliged to set them free, issuing, of course, a deportation order. In either case, irregular aliens are registered in the EURODAC system and, if apprehended again, their full record is available through the EURODAC database (Int. 3).

Map 6.1: Greece and Turkey



Source: adapted from Greek Ministry of Mercantile Marine, department of Security, February 2007.

In practice, in many cases, irregular migrants are set free and continue their journey by ferry from the islands, on foot or by truck (if they have crossed at the Evros River) in an attempt to join relatives, friends or co-nationals in the Greek capital, Athens. They either settle there and join the informal labour market or move on to another EU member state, depending on where they eventually aim to go and/or have further contacts (Papadopoulou 2004). In some cases, irregular migrants are shipped directly to the coast of mainland Greece (the peninsula of Euboea), from which they can easily reach Athens (Int. 1).

The numbers of irregular migrants entering Greece through its sea borders is not particularly high (see Chart 6 below). The main nationalities among those intercepted are Afghans, Iraqi Kurds, and Pakistanis, followed by Turkish Kurds, other Iraqis, other Turks, and Iranians. Some Egyptians and Syrians have also been registered. Smugglers arrested are mainly Turks and Greeks. According to interviews with the Police Forces and the Ministry of Mercantile Marine Security Department (Int. 1 and Int. 3) smugglers' networks operating through Turkey have their hub mainly in Istanbul and may adopt different *modus operandi*. Some are loosely organised networks of smaller teams of 'guides' that take responsibility for the different legs of the immigrants' journey (e.g., crossing the Turkish border from Iraq, Syria, or Iran, moving north to Istanbul, then reaching the Aegean coast and crossing the sea border to enter Greece). Others resemble more mafia-like organisations, with a meticulous schedule of the journey and contacts at intermediate transit stations. In some cases, migrants 'buy' their journey not only to Greece but further north. They are smuggled to Italy (hiding in ferries), through Albania (hiding in trucks) or by plane (using fake passports) (Papadopoulou 2004: 173).

Table 6.1: Top five Nationalities of Illegal Immigrants Apprehended at the Greek Sea Borders

Country \ Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007*	Total
Afghanistan	1,851	1,254	653	928	634	1,264	3,239	9,823
Iraq	2,677	1,100	166	139	304	348	471	5,205
Palestine	80	73	325	647	445	624	903	3,097
Somalia	10	139	439	234	298	182	921	2,223
Egypt	3	4	29	450	821	296	21	1,624

Source: Greek Ministry of Mercantile Marine, October 2007

* Data for 2007 refer to the period January 1st to October 14th 2007.

Recent studies (Icduygu and Toktas, 2002) suggest that Middle Eastern smuggling and trafficking of people through Turkey is operated mainly by informal organisations that can better be described as networks of local agents operating as independent individual groups. These networks are held together by the mutual interest of smugglers and their customers to complete the journey and are characterised by interpersonal trust relations, as well as national, ethnic, kinship or friendship connections.

The length of the Greek islands' coasts in the Aegean and their close proximity to the Turkish coast make the policing of this part of the external EU sea border particularly demanding in terms of human resources and technical equipment. The Greek coastguard operates in cooperation with the Europol and police authorities in western and northern EU countries (e.g., Britain or France) where irregular migrants are sometimes caught: an irregular migrant was, for instance, arrested by British officers while trying to cross the Channel tunnel between France and the UK illegally. The person had in his pocket a deportation order from the island of Lesbos, issued three months earlier (Int. 1). They also cooperate with Turkish police in establishing the routes through Turkey and in dismantling the smugglers' networks (Int. 1). Joint operations with other southern EU member states have, to date, been limited (Triandafyllidou, 2007). Papadopoulou (2004) notes the European dimension of the smuggling of migrants into Greece but criticises the entanglement between irregular migration and asylum-seeking, noting that people who are persecuted may indeed come to a country illegally – this does not nullify their need for international protection.

Despite the fact that the officials of both the Greek Police Headquarters and Ministry of Mercantile Marine claim that their operations and their staff work with full knowledge and respect of the immigrants' human rights (Int. 1 and Int. 3), there has been evidence to the contrary.²⁵ In particular, there have been reports by the NGO Pro Asyl and a related inquiry by the Greek Ombudsman which give grounds for concern that irregular migrants are often obliged to return to Turkey (they are put by force back on their boats and carried to Turkish waters or they are obliged to go back across the Evros River at the northeastern border in Thrace) without having been provided with first aid and without having been informed about their right to ask for asylum in Greece. Occasionally they may also be beaten or threatened to have information disclosed about their smugglers. Similar reports were already registered by NGOs and international organisations in 2000 and 2001 (Papadopoulou 2004: 171).

Our interviewees from the police forces (Int. 3) and from the Ministry of Mercantile Marine, Security Department (Int. 1) have denied such allegations and strongly affirmed their commitment to respecting the human rights of irregular migrants or asylum seekers. However,

²⁵ See letter of the Greek Ombudsman: <http://www.synigoros.gr/pdfs/proasul.pdf> (accessed on 14.12.2007) and also newspaper articles at one of the major Greek dailies *Eleftherotipia* on 31 October 2007 and 1 November 2007.

they also argued that most asylum seekers are in reality irregular migrants who seek thus to obtain the 'pink card' which allows them to stay and work legally in Greece for six months and/or until their application is processed. When the application is rejected, these people disappear into the informal economy of Athens or other areas. This view indirectly justifies why irregular migrants are not provided with the opportunity to seek asylum. The implicit argument is: 'if they are there to cheat the system, the police ought not allow them to seek asylum in the first place.'

The high-ranking police officer we interviewed (Int. 3) argued that they are able to establish whether an irregular migrant is a true or 'bogus' asylum seeker by determining which country they come from. He was thus applying the notion of 'safe' and 'unsafe' country of origin. Our interviewee (Int. 3) agreed that there is a problem with finding reliable interpreters for languages spoken in Asia (such as Urdu, for instance) who are willing to work at the island reception and detention centres. He actually noted that such interpreters have to be brought to these centres from Athens, that this is not always possible, and that it may prove quite costly (Int. 3).

Recent research (Papadopoulou, 2004) suggests, however, that some of those who could claim asylum in Greece (people of Kurdish ethnicity for instance) do not wish to do so because they prefer to continue their journey to the west and north with the goal of reaching a country where they have relatives and claim asylum there. Another motivation for this is that Greece has an extremely low recognition rate for asylum applications (steadily below 10% and, since 2002, below 1%, contrary to most western European countries where recognition rates range between 20% and 40%). Papadopoulou (2004: 174-5) confirms from her own fieldwork with smuggled Kurdish migrants and asylum seekers that some chose to come to Greece in an attempt to join family or friends that are already in the country, while others see Greece only as a transit country and/or are informed about asylum recognition rates in different countries.

6.1.2 The Northern Greek Border

The second main irregular migration path into Greece goes through the Greek northern land borders. Antonopoulos and Winterdyk (2006) have recently studied migrant smuggling into Greece and note that there are different actors within each network that specialise in different tasks: the leader, the recruiters (of immigrant customers), the transporters or guides, the scouts, the hotel/house/flat owners, and corrupt public officials who complete the smuggling chain. They also note the evolution of smuggling operation across the years. Until 1998 and the setting up of the Greek border guard forces – as well as the intensification of the coastguard patrols near Corfu – many Albanians were smuggled on foot through the mountains or by speed boat from the Albanian coast to Corfu or the Greek coast south of the Greek-Albanian border. Indeed Papakonstantis (2000) puts at 75.5 % the percentage of undocumented migrants entering Greece through the mountains, nearly 14% crossing a river and only 10% crossing the sea. The data provided by the Ministry of the Interior (see table 6.1 above) confirm this view.

Irregular migration from the North takes many routes, including from Turkey via the FYROM and Bulgaria or also from Greece via Albania to Italy (Antonopoulos and Winterdyk 2006: 453). The empirical research of these two authors shows that a variety of means is used by irregular migrants, including public transportation, truck, car, taxi, motorcycle. Smuggling fees vary substantially (ibid.) and can range from 150 USD to 7000 USD, depending on the risk factors and nature and length of the crossing (by land or sea). However, clearly not all

irregular migrants use the services of smuggling networks. Police and border guard patrol operations to combat irregular migration have, to date, attracted less media or public attention than the sea border controls and possible abuse of power by coast guard and police officers there. This is quite interesting if one notes that the northern Greek border has been the main point of entry of undocumented migrants – especially in the 1990s – for not only Albanian citizens but generally for people from Central and East Eastern European countries (Albania, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania) and from Eurasia (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia). The explanation lies, perhaps, in the fact that many of the undocumented migrants who crossed the northern borders did so alone or in small groups by foot or car along unguarded paths. A second explanation is that many of these irregular migrants used fake passports and documents (Papantoniou et al. 1998) and hence entered legally but then abused their visas and overstayed.

6.2 Internal Controls

Internal controls were frequent during the 1990s, targeting mostly Albanian immigrants. In the early to mid-1990s, massive deportations – mainly of Albanian citizens – became common police practice (see table 4 below for data) and were often used as a means for exerting pressure on the Albanian government for its treatment of the Greek minority in Albania. Checks were usually carried out in public places, more often than not in locations where it was known that irregular migrant workers gathered to find daily employment or to meet co-nationals. They took place within public view, people were loaded on buses and directed to Albania without, sometimes, even being the possibility to notify their relatives.

These operations cost Greece – and the EU, which partly subsidised these measures as a means of controlling irregular migration into Europe – a considerable amount of money, without bringing about the desirable effect of actually holding migration in check. Actually, these measures, apart from being inhuman and ineffective, also reinforced a common view of migration as a crime and of all migrants as criminals (see also Pavlou 2001, Panousis 2007). They were abandoned, to a large extent, after the mid-1990s as the Greek government realised that a massive regularisation programme was probably the only realistic measure for dealing with the several hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants who resided and worked in the country in the mid-1990s already.

Table 6.2: Major expulsions from Greece according to nationality (in thousands)

Nationality	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Albanian	84.3	277.0	221.0	216.5	241.2
Bulgarian	-	.4	1.0	0.8	1.4
Iraqi	.2	.3	11.5	1.8	3.9
Pakistani	-	.3	1.5	1.6	1.8
Romanian	.5	2.2	2.2	2.0	0.4
Turkish	-	.1	.4	0.6	2.3
Bangladeshi	-	-	-	0.4	0.5
Total	86.0	282.0	239.0	225.0	250.4

Source: Baldwin - Edwards and Fakiolas, 1998: 197.

The nature of internal control has changed in the past few years. The operations are no longer massive, as there are no longer such visible areas where immigrants gather to wait for prospective employers – as it used to happen in the early to mid-1990s. Instead, they have the form of random inspections in places where illegal immigrants are likely to be found, such as

buses going from cities near the border to Athens and Thessaloniki. However, they also happen in places where people – both natives and migrants – gather, such as metro or bus stops, public gardens, or squares. More often than not, such inspections are related to the illegal petty trade of counterfeit goods that immigrants engage in (selling CDs, fake designer bags, plastic toys and other paraphernalia). Such controls are no longer massive but they remain notable, to the extent that police officers may even place handcuffs on the arrested migrant who sold counterfeit CDs on the sidewalk of a central Athens neighbourhood.

Our interviewee from the Directorate of the Greek Police (Int. 3) argued that police directors in each district know their area of responsibility well, are acquainted with the businesses that operate there and whether they employ aliens or not. He thus argued that their checks for irregular migrant workers are part of their overall enforcement strategy and is not targeted specifically at ‘sensitive’ sectors nor is it based on cues such as the speaking of a foreign language in a specific workplace. He admitted, however, that such a practice is easier in rural areas and small urban centres where people know each other and may be more difficult to implement in the Athens metropolitan area. He admitted that controls in Athens tend to be random or targeting specific public places.

Surprisingly, he also noted that when checking foreigners and their papers, police usually escort them to the nearest police stations and check that their papers are not counterfeit. Interestingly, it seemed that our informant (Int. 3) was practically assuming that immigrants’ papers would be false unless they could prove that they were genuine. He noted that controlling migration is a top priority, while he was not concerned that such enforcement practices disturbed legal migrants who were going about their business. Clearly here the interviewee was not aware that screening by phenotype or physical appearance or dress mode constitutes ethnic and/or racial discrimination.

In conclusion, our study shows that Greece faces an important challenge as regards irregular migration since its borders are all external borders of the EU (with the exception of the Greek-Bulgarian border which, as of 2007, has become an internal EU border). The country is exposed to two main irregular migration paths: one from Asia, the Middle East and Africa through Turkey to the islands or to the northeastern region of Thrace and a second path from former Communist countries at the northern Greek border (mainly Albania but also the FYROM and Bulgaria). Efforts to combat illegal entries and the enforcement of internal controls have fluctuated over the years. While in the 1990s controls and deportations, mainly of Albanian citizens, were massive, today controls are random or targeted but, to a certain extent, selective (probably targeting specific areas or people with a certain stereotyped physical appearance or dress code). There appears to be no concern that such controls may harass legal immigrants.

External control policies in Greece have increasingly paid more attention to cooperation with neighbouring countries (Int. 2). Readmission agreements have been signed with Albania, Bulgaria, a Protocol of Readmission has been concluded with Turkey, and there are local cooperation agreements on the Greek-Macedonian (FYROM) border. The implementation of the Protocol with Turkey does not function properly (out of nearly 4,000 requests for a total of approximately 28,000 people, less than 2,000 persons have been readmitted from Greece to Turkey). Overall, the philosophy of enforcement of external controls has changed since the 1990s: Greece does not seek to fend off its border from the inside but rather to act in cooperation with neighbouring countries that are important sending or transit countries, providing, in exchange, programmes of seasonal migration and development aid. Perhaps

things could improve further if joint control actions took place in the framework of the FRONTEX agency or with the assistance of international organisations such as the IOM (International Organisation for Migration), as happened in the case of Albania and Italy with to the aim of effectively combating human smuggling and trafficking and diffusing information to interested migrants about the dangers of illegal border crossing and undocumented stay/work in Greece.

Unfortunately, our empirical research shows that there is no purposeful coordination between external or internal border controls and the overall policy for managing migration flows and stocks. Thus, control efforts seem to have been constant, if not increasing, through the years, despite the fact that during the last ten years Greece has enacted three regularisation programmes with nearly one million applicants in total. In other words, contrary to what our interviewee at the Ministry of Interior (Int. 2) suggested, notably that the police relax their controls when there is a regularization process ongoing, our informant from the police directorate did not relate their enforcement efforts or practices to the enactment of regularisation programmes. Regularisations seem to have happened unplanned, completely independently from control efforts.

One would have expected that, after the repeated regularisations of the recent years, there would be a coordinated effort to, on one hand, regulate legal migration and avoid the errors of the past while, on the other hand, combating irregular migration. However, and as we shall see in the next section, the two parts of the policy seem to be implemented independently from each other. Our interviewee from the police directorate was aware that migration cannot be stopped as long as dramatic socio-economic inequalities persist between sending and receiving countries (Int. 3). Thus, he appeared to be aware that they are engaged in a Sisyphean task, whereby the boulder will never be successfully pushed to the top of the mountain.

7. Migration management through regularisation programmes and stay permit issuing and renewal

Regularization programs can be positive since they improve irregular immigrants' social conditions, they give the state the ability to comprehend and control the labour market and increase its tax revenues. In addition, they can be beneficial to the social security system. Finally, regularisation programs can bring to light valuable information concerning a country's demographics and immigrant participation in the labour force. On the other hand, some argue that the regularisation of immigrants 'rewards criminal behaviour' and encourages further irregular migration (Levinson, 2005). Most importantly, however, regularisation programmes cannot be a mid- or a long-term migration policy – albeit this is what they have been in Greece – and in most southern European countries – in the past 20 years.

Greece has implemented a series of regularisation programs: the first regularisation programme was enacted in 1998 and there were 370,000 applicants during the first phase, but only 212,000 in the second phase of the programme. The second regularisation programme took place in 2001 with 362,000 applicants, and the third major regularisation took place in 2005-06 with approximately 200,000 applicants. The applicants in each programme partly overlapped since several who failed under the first programme applied during the second, and, similarly, some who failed to obtain a permit under the regularisation of 2001 re-applied in 2005. It is also noteworthy that many people did not manage to make the transition from the so-called Green Card permit introduced in decrees 357 and 358 of 1997 to the separate stay and work permits of law 2910/2001, and then to the unified stay permit for work purposes of law 3386/2005.

The need for repeated regularisations in Greece is closely related not only to the continuing illegal immigration to the country but also, and to a large extent, to the frequent shifts between legal and illegal status that many immigrants have experienced. This has happened for two main reasons: first, because the procedures foreseen by the law to issue or renew a stay permit are complicated and the procedure cumbersome, and second because in Greece there has as yet not been a proper policy for managing legally incoming economic migration. In other words, the question of regularisations in Greece lies at the intersection of the two main troubles that plague migrants: first, that they cannot come legally to the country to work and, second, that if they manage to legalise their status it is difficult to find and keep a regular job so that they satisfy the conditions set out by the law at the time of renewing their permit.

7.1 The procedure of inviting a foreign worker (*metaklisi*)

According to law 3386/2005 on the 'entrance, settlement and social integration of citizens of third countries in the Greek State' there are seven types of residence permits: for work, for independent economic activity, for special reasons such as studying, for exceptional reasons, mostly humanitarian ones, for family reunification, of indefinite duration and of long-time residence.

Since the enactment of the first Greek law that intended to regulate immigration, and more specifically to counteract irregular migration (1975/1991), in 1991, the only way for a foreign worker to acquire a residence permit with the purpose of employment is through invitation (Emke-Poulopoulou, 2007). The Greek policy for labour migration (*metaklisi*), which involves a rather complex procedure, allows immigrants to work in Greece, for a specific

employer and for a specific type of work, but only if there is an available position for them which cannot be filled by the Greek labour force or the immigrant labour force that already resides in Greece.

Law 3386/2005 seeks to rationalise the system of inviting foreign workers to Greece (article 14). The new system, which is similar to that established by law 2910/2001 commented upon earlier, is based on the preparation of an annual review regarding the domestic labour market needs in specific sectors of work. On the basis of this report, the Ministry of Employment, determines ‘the highest number of stay permits for work purposes that can be issued each year to third country nationals, per prefecture, per nationality, per type and length of employment, and all related details (article 14, point 4).

Employers who wish to invite an immigrant worker need to apply to their municipality by the 30th of June of every year, informing the authorities of the number and the specialization of the employees they need for the following year as well as of the duration of the employment. The municipality sends the requests to the prefecture (*Nomarchia*) and the prefecture sends the requests to the appropriate branch of the Organization for the Employment of the Labour Force (OAED) for a labour market test. If no Greek citizen, EU citizen, refugee or legally residing immigrant is available for the requested positions, the green light is given to the request.

After the control by OAED, each prefecture sends these requests to the Directorate of Foreigners and Immigration of the Region (*Perifereia*), which sends a report to the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, based upon which the Ministers of Internal Affairs, External Affairs and Employment determine the highest number of stay permits for the purpose of employment that can be issued in the following year.

The Common Ministerial Decision is then sent out to the corresponding Ministries, Regions, OAED and the Greek consulates abroad. After that, the prospective employers must once more apply to the Municipality. The requests are then forwarded to the Directorate of Foreigners and Immigration of the Region. As soon as the Region verifies that the same employers had also applied before the 30th of June of the previous year, checks if the specialties of the requests are included in the Common Ministerial Decision and that the number of employees needed does not exceed the maximum number, it sends the lists to the Greek consular authorities abroad. The consular authorities receive applications from prospective immigrant workers, compile lists of names and forward them to the Regions, which forward them to the municipalities. Finally, the interested employers make a selection from that list, by drafting an application of invitation for a specific person.

It is clear from the above description – that is based on both our knowledge of the law but also on our interviewees’ accounts (Int. 4, Int. 5, Int. 6, Int. 9) – that the invitation procedure is extremely complex and time-consuming. The data collected from the Municipality of Athens and our interviews with municipality officials (Int. 5 and Int. 6) show that, in actuality, very few employers in the Athens metropolitan area chose to invite foreign labourers using the procedure outlined above. Our interviews with the Confederation of Greek Labourers (Int. 9) and with the Ministry of Employment (Int. 4) confirm the abject failure of the invitation system for short- or mid-term employment positions. One interviewee from a municipality near the centre of Athens (Int. 6) notes that an invitation procedure may last up to 18 months and no less than a year. It is obvious that private firms cannot wait for such a long time for one or more workers who are urgently needed. At the same time, it is also extremely difficult

for a firm to foresee, with a 12-month advance notice, their labour needs and hence apply a year or 1.5 years earlier than when the vacancy arises. The problem with following this procedure is also complicated by the fact that since the Labour Offices established by law 3386/2005 have not been created in Greek consulates (Int. 4 and Int. 2) as planned, there is no way for the employer to test or interview or receive additional information about the worker that will come to fill their vacancies. Overall, the meeting of supply and demand through the current invitation system is virtually impossible.

The invitation procedure is ill-crafted to respond to the needs of the labour market and becomes completely unrealistic if one considers that the labour market sectors where immigrants are predominantly employed (construction, catering, small factories, retail services) are dominated by small firms that have to adapt flexibly and quickly to the swings of the market.

Our fieldwork has shown that the invitation procedure has given fruit only partially, in the agricultural sector, where seasonal employment is the norm. In northern Greece, where seasonal workers come from across the border with Albania, the FYROM or Bulgaria and only travel a few hundred kilometers, the invitation procedure has worked relatively well (Int. 4). Farmers tend to employ the same workers every year, so they make nominal requests for specific workers to the municipality. The needs are roughly the same every year and hence there is no need for labour market tests with OAED that would further delay the procedure.

Our interviewees at the Ministry of Employment (Int. 4) see seasonal employment as a 'legitimate' type of migration. In other words, they argue that this is an optimal situation, where the domestic labour market needs are satisfied and the foreign workers earn some much-needed supplemental income for themselves and their families. The fact that seasonal workers return to their homes once the harvest is done, was seen by our informants (Int. 4) as a good thing, since they believed that the country has reached the limits of its capacity to accept immigrants. Our interviewees in the Ministry of Employment (Int. 4) note that their service does everything possible to respond to the needs of the employers in agricultural regions and approve their requests on time so as to enable them to complete the harvest or any other agricultural work they need performed. Nonetheless, irregular employment in agriculture is often reported in the media²⁶, showing that, despite our informants' arguments regarding the efficiency of controls and of regulating seasonal migration, there are still several thousand irregular migrants in the Greek agricultural sector.

When prompted by the interviewers about the labour market needs for non-seasonal employment, they argued that a more flexible invitation system would leave the doors wide open to crowds of migrants who would come to Greece without any control (Int. 4). It is interesting that the respective officials, with more than 10 years of experience in this branch of the Ministry, could not accept that the dysfunctional character of the invitation procedure is partly responsible for the continuation of irregular migration towards Greece. For us, it is clear that the lack of flexibility in the invitation system encourages immigrants and employers to pursue irregular migration paths and informal employment agreements. In other words, employers are likely to seek labourers among the legal or irregular migrants who are currently residing in Greece. Or they may as well use their personal networks (acquaintances with

²⁶ The major daily *Kathimerini* reported, for instance, on 15 January 2007 (p.3), a dramatic case in exploitation and in inhuman living and working conditions for Asian irregular migrants harvesting oranges in northwestern Greece. The left-wing daily *Rizospastis* had reported, on 11 May 2007, similar cases of exploitation and unacceptable working and living conditions in the western Peloponnese last spring.

migrants who work in Greece or other employers who employ immigrant workers or indeed specialised agencies who bring irregular migrant workers to the country) to invite a foreign worker from her/his country of origin. Even in cases where the network connection has been made through these informal networks, and the invitation could be nominal, the invitation procedure does not allow for such requests. Rather, the new immigrant, who is often a relative or a friend of an established migrant, comes to Greece with a counterfeit passport, with a tourism visa or with an invitation by a relative for family reasons or with the ‘help’ of smuggling networks, and, once in the country, takes up the arranged job and waits for the next regularisation programme to obtain legal status.

7.2 Securing a permit and a legal job

The second problem that immigrants are faced with once they manage to regularize their status is to find and keep a legal job, so that they will be able to renew their stay permit when it expires. There are two kinds of problems here. First, the problem of securing a legal job and, second, the immense delays in the issuing/renewing of stay permits that has marked the Greek policy since the late 1990s, when the first attempts to manage migration started.

Migrants face important difficulties in securing a contract and welfare payments, given that they are employed in sectors where informal work is the norm even for natives. Sectors such as construction, private services within families (caring and cleaning) and catering (e.g., as waiters or cleaners in family restaurants, small pensions, small cafes) belong to the secondary job market. Workers in these sectors often work without a proper contract or welfare contributions. Nonetheless, the issuing and renewal of stay permits for work purposes in Greece is totally conditioned upon providing proof of legal employment. Since immigrants may have been employed at different jobs during a calendar year, the law specifies that employment is proven by their contributions to the welfare system, by the famous ‘welfare stamps’ (*ensima*) that provide proof of their days of work. Law 3386/2005 has actually simplified the matter allowing for immigrants who work in construction or domestic services to register on their own with the National Insurance Institute (IKA) to be eligible for a lower level of contributions (those foreseen for part-time dependent employees) and hence prove their employment autonomously, without the need for producing a contract with a specific employer.

Immigrants have to collect 200 daily welfare stamps in each calendar year to have their permit renewed. When regularising their status for the first time, they are allowed to buy these welfare stamps independently from the IKA or from the Agricultural Insurance Organisation (OGA). However, when renewing their permits they are *normally* not allowed to buy missing stamps. The rationale behind the law here is to oblige the employers to pay welfare contributions to their employees, but it is unfortunately common knowledge that as long as employer inspections and sanctions are scarce (Int. 2), it is usually the workers that pay for the welfare stamps. The new regularisation programme introduced by law 3536/2007 in February 2007 aimed at giving a second chance to people who had not managed to collect the necessary 200 welfare stamps through their employers, to buy such stamps for themselves and to avoid falling back to irregular status. However, as our interviewees at the Ministry of the Interior noted, it was often obvious from their migration history (several years of legal stay for employment purposes in Greece) that some migrants held a stable job but their employer had them registered with the welfare services only for part of their working time, so that they eventually did not manage to put together 200 welfare stamps (corresponding to 200 working days).

Interestingly, our interviewee from the General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE) (Int. 9) mentioned that employers prefer immigrant workers to be legal but they pay them the minimum wage, no overtime and even threaten them with laying them off if they complain. This practice of employers was also documented by Markova (2007) in the late 1990s. Since migrants are totally dependent on their welfare stamps for renewing their permit every one or two years, they are unlikely to protest. In other words, even if they are legal, they remain attractive to employers due to the fact that they are willing to work for smaller salaries and to be insured for fewer days than they have actually worked.

A positive aspect resulted from our fieldwork at a labour inspection office in the northern outskirts of Athens. Immigrants account for up to one-third of all cases processed each year in the past few years in this labour inspectorate. Our interviewee (Int. 8) noted how much trust immigrants place in them and that, despite the fact that they cannot impose any sanctions, their mediation usually leads to the successful settlement of complaints between employers and workers. In other words, employers are willing to pay their dues for fear that the labour inspectorate will refer the case to the industrial tribunal. However, the cases referred to by the labour inspectorate are still not numerous compared to the number of migrant workers present in the Athens area (see Table 7 below). The role of labour inspectorates needs further empirical study to ascertain their actual impact on the labour market insertion of migrant workers, with or without stay permits.

Table 7.1: Complaints at a Labour Inspectorate in Northern Athens

Year	Total complaints	Complaints by foreigners	% of the total
2007	360	91	25,27%
2006	299	50	16,72%
2005	343	100	29,15%
2004	355	75	21,12%
2003	391	103	26,34%

The above discussion shows how difficult it is for migrants to obtain and maintain a legal job with welfare contributions but also how vital these contributions are for the issuing and renewal of their stay permits. Things are rendered worse by the short duration of the stay permits and the lengthy process required for their renewal. Until 2002, only one-year permits were the norm. Since then, and especially for immigrants who hold stay permits for dependent employment, things have become slightly simpler, because two-year permits are now issued. An additional problem is, however, that the process of renewing a permit is particularly lengthy and cumbersome. The bureaucratic requirements, the documents to be produced, take a lot of time and energy to obtain and this means that immigrants need to invest a lot of their working time (risking losing their job) or need to pay a lawyer or an informal go-between (often a co-national that is well networked with the municipal services) to have their papers processed.

Our interviews at the Ministry of Interior (Int. 2) have shown that the main problem with the current system of issuing/renewing permits lies in the many services involved. Immigrants present their applications at the municipality in which they live. Employees in small municipalities often have to cover several tasks at a time and have received little training on migration matters. Hence they may misplace some data for the application or give inaccurate information to the applicant. When the application is transferred to the region, regional employees identify the errors and may send the file back to the municipality for correction or

because some documents are missing. The municipal office does not contact the applicant but rather waits for the applicant to come to the municipal desk again to inform them that some documents are missing or misplaced. In some cases, additional checks are performed – e.g., for independent economic activity – and an interview with the regional committee may be required. This means that the procedure is further delayed. Any small error or inaccuracy translates into long delays because the file has to be transferred from the municipality to the region, from the region to the Interior Ministry and then back again to the region and the municipality for the foreigner to receive her/his stay permit. Our interviewees have noted that the digitalisation of the penal records archive of the Ministry of Justice that has just been completed (October 2007) will shorten the delays because the Region will be able to check the applicants' penal record on-line. Our interviews with the municipalities of Athens and Tavros (Int. 5, Int. 6) have indeed highlighted the difference between a large municipality like Athens that can afford specialised personnel and a small municipality, where the migration department is under-staffed and where the same employee performs multiple tasks.

In conclusion, our fieldwork has shown that the huge delays still manifest in the Greek system for issuing and renewing stay permits is due to the following factors: (a) too many services are involved, (b) some archives are not available online, which requires the physical transfer of documents and files between offices, (c) the insufficient training of some of the staff and also the fact that both municipalities and regions often work with temporary personnel. By the time their staff becomes experienced they have to leave and new employees take their place with no expertise and in need of new training (Int. 10). The Interior Ministry employees (Int. 2) highlighted the need for one-stop shops with employees from all services that would process applications in place and that would issue permits in a short period, i.e. one of a few weeks. Currently a delay of 3 months is a positive record for the renewal of stay permits for dependent employment in the municipality of Athens, while the processing of stay permits often takes up to a year or more if the slightest complication arises (Int. 10).

The difficulty of finding and keeping a legal job, on one hand, and the long delays in the issuing/renewal of stay permits, on the other, constitute a heavy burden for migrants who are de facto settled in Greece. The combination of these two factors keeps migrant workers hostages within Greece's secondary labour market and under the mercy of sometimes unscrupulous employers.

8. Media Discourses and Public Opinion on Migration in Greece

8.1 Media Discourses

An early study prepared for the Council of Europe (Spinelli et al. 1993) identified the following themes as the main focus of the press coverage on migration:

- Immigrants increase unemployment among natives;
- Immigrants are responsible for an increase in criminality (these mostly involve property-related offences, but also drug trafficking and rape).
- The main ‘solutions’ to the ‘immigration problem’ include stricter laws and harsher enforcement, especially concerning border control; and,
- Ethnic origin and/or nationality tend to be highlighted – particularly in the case of Albanians.

Looking at the contemporary media coverage and political discourse, a decade after this study was undertaken, improvement is unfortunately rather limited. Since the late 1990s, the coverage of cultural and ethnic diversity has been marked by an improvement, resulting in more balanced accounts of immigration and minority issues, albeit sidestepping the issue of minority and immigrants’ rights.

In an earlier study focusing on media reporting of minority and immigration issues in the mid-to late 1990s, Triandafyllidou (2002) distinguishes between two main categories of newspapers and TV channels and their respective attitudes towards minority issues. A large part of the daily press and private TV stations adopt a nationalist, xenophobic, and even racist standpoint, promoting a view of Greece as culturally and ethnically ‘pure’ and homogeneous. The right-wing press and private TV channels in particular, show little sensitivity towards cultural difference and tend to stigmatise and discriminate against immigrants and minorities.²⁷ A few dissenting voices, including state TV channels, mainstream and left-wing newspapers, adopt a more careful and sensitive approach when reporting on ethnic issues and about minority and immigration matters, and are characterised by a relative openness to cultural and ethnic diversity with only a mildly nationalist viewpoint. Nonetheless, they fail to react and criticise verbal harassment, the racist attitudes and behaviour exhibited by the majority of the political elite. At the risk of generalising, the media – which are characterised by an extremely nationalist-xenophobic discourse – have, in the majority of cases, a right-wing orientation, while the mildly nationalist, more-sensitive media belong to the centre and left-wing of Greek politics. Granted, there are exceptions to this rule. For example, the nationalist camp also includes left-wing newspapers, while traditional right-wing newspapers are also found on the moderate side.

To a significant extent, reporting on minorities and immigrants is couched in ‘conspiracy theories’ rhetoric and an overall perception of national threat. In these cases, the Greek nation’s ‘cultural, ethnic or even religious ‘purity’ and well-being is perceived as threatened by internal or external ‘enemies.’ The common feature of the various ‘enemies’ singled out in

²⁷ Greece’s historical minorities include the following national, ethno-linguistic and religious groups (percentages refer to the total resident population): Roma 3.3%; Arvanites 2%; members of the Macedonian minority 2%; Vlachs 2%; Turks 1.0%; Pomaks 0.3. Religious minorities, which include Catholics, Protestants and new religious movements, make up nearly 1 per cent of the population. Among these minorities, the Greek State only recognises the existence of Turkish Muslims, the Roma population and Greek Catholics and Protestants.’ (Minority Rights Group (MRG), 1994; Triandafyllidou, 2002)

different points in time and with regard to different issues or events is predominantly their non-Greek origin and culture; they may either be historical enemies (e.g., Turks) or national traitors (e.g., members of the Macedonian minority). In other words, reporting concentrates more on the presumed threat for the country and the people than on practical issues of minority and immigrant integration. This becomes a distorting lens for reading and interpreting the actions and words, often taken out of context, not only of the presumed 'enemies' but also of any third parties intervening in a given matter. Such third parties include fellow EU member-states, European or other international bodies, the U.S. government, and even Greek non-governmental organisations defending minority rights.

'Political correctness' or minority sensitivity is far from being common practice, especially in the language used by the tabloids and newspapers that adopt extreme nationalist views. Accusations of racism are denied and any anti-racist argument is turned on its head; authors are not racist, they simply point to the danger or damage inflicted on the country and its people by foreigners. Pavlou (2001) points to the invented reality of news bulletins. He argues that the press discourse reproduces police bulletins and systematically 'recycles' criminal news, so that they appear to be more frequent than they actually are. Overall, the media rarely defines concepts such as 'racism', 'anti-racism', or 'cultural diversity'. Diversity is represented as 'a deleterious thing', 'hybridisation', a loss of 'purity' or both cultural and political autonomy, while homogeneity and nationalism are praised as 'a desirable thing'. It is worth noting that the more moderate media adopts a more open and sensitive stance. They report the arguments of the different parties involved in minority or immigrant matters, and avoid the use of offensive terms such as 'barbaric', or 'inhuman.' Their accounts, to the extent that this is possible, constitute a more even-handed approach to the issues or events reported. Nonetheless, criticism of other newspapers or TV programmes for using racist language and/or inciting ethnic hatred is exceptional. By failing to clearly stand up for minority rights and individual civil rights, the moderate, 'impartial' media does little to stem intolerance and racism. There are few studies analysing directly and in detail the language used in news or commentaries on migration (Pavlou, 2001; Petronoti, 2000; Triandafyllidou, 2000; 2001) and there are no studies, as yet, that examine the ways in which news-making practices and routines affect the content and form of migration reporting.

A few words on the current issues that tend to attract most of the media attention may be illustrative of the issues relating to migration that are perceived as being important by the host country's population, and of the general public's sensitivities with regard to the immigrant population's living conditions. References to immigrants may be grouped under the following general themes:

- *Illegal immigrants attempting to enter Greece.* Stories of boats captured or shipwrecked off the shores of various Greek islands with scores of illegal immigrants hidden below deck are very common in the printed and audio-visual press. Reporters emphasise in particular that (a) in their attempt to seek a better life, hundreds and thousands of persons (principally from Asia) are prepared to risk their lives, and (b) that these people are exploited by 'inhuman' traffickers who charge exorbitant amounts to bring them illegally to Europe with no consideration for their safety and life.
- *Trafficking of women.* Stories of women from Eastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine and Moldavia especially that are brought to Greece under false work pretences and are then forced into prostitution are very frequent. Reports (undercover and news documentaries) tell the stories of young girls and women that are either brought into Greece illegally and,

therefore, have no papers, or whose passports, and papers are ‘confiscated’ by bar-owners and human traffickers. They thus have no possibility of resorting to the authorities to be protected and are sexually exploited in Athens and in the rural areas. Such stories frequently allude to the involvement or at the very least the acquiescence of the local police authorities.

- *Immigrant criminality.* Both petty crimes against one’s property but also more serious crimes (e.g., armed robbery, murder, drug or women and children trafficking) are often related to immigrants in television bulletins and newspaper reports. The media tends to propagate ethnic prejudice by reporting and commenting on national categorisations of crimes (e.g., Albanians are involved in all sorts of trafficking/the Albanian mafia is omnipresent and the worst of its kind, Russians are prostitutes, Romanians commit murders and robberies, Bulgarians sell their children and so on). Suspects or convicted perpetrators are referred to by their nationality or ethnic origin. In a recent murder of a young Georgian child in the north of Greece that has attracted media attention for several months given the tragic nature of the crime (both the victim and the suspected perpetrators are children) the nationality (Greek, Albanian, Georgian) but also the ethnic origin (e.g., ethnic Greek Albanian) of the people involved were repeatedly reported in the news bulletins as a means to identify them (names of the minors under investigation by the police were of course withheld).
- *Anecdotal news on immigrant integration including immigrant children in public schools.* There are some reports and articles presenting individual stories of migrants who are positive role models either through their successful careers (as writers, singers, actors, musicians and more rarely scientists or professionals) or through their personal conduct (e.g., a Filipino woman who found and saved an abandoned newborn in January 2008, was widely reported in the radio and press). There is also some attention paid to overall issues of immigrant integration, the work performed by municipal authorities (predominantly the Athens municipality), individual stories of integration in different regions of Greece, or the growing number of immigrant children in public schools.

In conclusion, despite this rather discouraging description of the media landscape, there are growing trends of increased sensitivity towards minority and immigrant problems, of increasing acceptance of diversity within Greece, and a tendency to give voice to minorities themselves as well as to NGOs active in the field. These trends mainly characterise the moderate and progressive segment of the press and TV channels. Critical accounts of the hard work and peaceful lives of immigrant labourers (Albanians in particular) are given, and related state policy is criticised. Also, success stories of young immigrant pupils, foreign musicians, actors or writers and intellectuals, mainly of Albanian nationality, are reported in magazines and newspapers, and more rarely in television programmes. Nonetheless, minority or immigrant rights are never on the media agenda as collective political rights. The coverage concerns mainly the improvement of their living or working conditions, their access to education or work, but not their politicisation as non-Greek cultural or ethnic groups that nevertheless comprise a part of Greece.

It is interesting to note that over the last few years, popular television programmes, serials and reality shows have been including immigrants in their casting, theatrical plays are staged by immigrant artists and immigrant artists participate in mainstream productions. More importantly though, small television stations such as *Kanali 10* provide news updates in Russian and Albanian and certain radio stations in the Attica prefecture cater to the immigrant

communities (such as national broadcasting ERA, or Radio 98.4, etc).

The modest positive change in the media coverage of minority and immigration issues may be related to cultural initiatives undertaken by known artists and media professionals promoting understanding of and receptiveness towards diversity. In addition, there has been a mobilisation of NGO activists and a small number of intellectuals to whom the more moderate newspapers occasionally give access. Last, but not least, the more balanced accounts of immigration issues in particular are related to the positive role that immigrants are perceived to be playing in the national economy. This includes taking care of the elderly or of younger children, of catering to labour shortages in low-status and low-paying jobs in agriculture and the service sectors; overall, this has made the Greek people and national media more open to them.

8.2 Public opinion

There is a dearth of research on public opinion concerning migration in Greece. Early studies (Triandafyllidou and Mikrakis 1995) had noted the sudden transformation of Greece from a xenophilic to a xenophobic country. Already in 1994 a majority of Greek citizens (64%) felt that the country had reached its limits in terms of how many foreigners it could take (Eurobarometre, EB42). In 1997, in a Eurobarometer survey on European citizens' attitudes towards racism, Greek respondents registered very low scores of acceptance when asked if they should accept people from the south of the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and asylum seekers to come and work in their countries. Actually nearly one-third of Greek respondents said that neither of these categories should be accepted (Eurobarometer, EB48). Moreover, 70% of Greek respondents (compared to 45% of EU15 average) said that there were too many foreigners living in EU countries – that was the highest score among all EU 15 countries. Only 1% of Greek respondents said there were not too many foreigners in EU countries, compared to the 10% EU15 average on this question. In the same survey Greeks scored lowest in terms of acceptance of people of another race (67% compared to 83% EU15 average) and of another nationality (64% compared to 81% of EU 15 average). This snapshot of Greek public opinion on foreigners suggests that Greece had become a strongly xenophobic and probably a racist country. Clearly, the change in Greek attitudes was linked to the onset of massive migration towards Greece beginning in 1991 (Triandafyllidou and Mikrakis *ibid.*).

A recent survey presents interesting findings (VPRC, 2006a) as it outlines overall a positive view of migrants and a lack of prejudice against them, but also contradicting opinions with regard to the immigrants' position in and impact on Greek society and its economy. While 19% of all respondents say they do not personally know an immigrant, 38 % know an immigrant and are friends with her/him, while a slightly higher percentage (43%) are acquainted with immigrants but have no immigrant friend(s). This finding suggests that Greek society becomes increasingly mixed and there is limited social segregation between migrants and natives. An impressive two-thirds of the respondents (68%) note that they would not feel bothered if a close relative of theirs married an immigrant, and 90% say they are not bothered by the immigrant presence in the streets. Thus, overall there seems to be an acceptance of immigrants as part of Greek society.

Regarding immigrant contribution to the national economy, just over half of the respondents (54%) note that immigrants make a positive contribution to the national economy while 34% disagree with this view. Respondents, however, are inconsistent in their views on the impact of immigrant labour in the job market: 56% believe that immigrants are to blame for the

increase in unemployment²⁸ in Greece (36% disagree with this view) but a striking 88% of respondents notes that immigrants do jobs that Greeks are not willing to do (only 8% disagree²⁹ with this view). It is hard to understand – and a quantitative survey does not provide the opportunity for further exploration of this issue – how it is possible that migrants steal the jobs of Greeks if migrants do the jobs that Greeks are not willing to take. Moreover, 78% of respondents believe that migrants should have the same labour rights as Greek workers³⁰ and 90% believe that migrants should enjoy the same health and education services as Greeks do. Three-quarters of the respondents (73%) believe that migrants should receive equal pay as Greeks for the same type of work but it must be noted that one-quarter of the respondents (23%) disagrees with this view (while only 16% thought that migrants should not have the same labour rights that Greeks have).

On the whole, respondents showed a certain level of confidence with regard to the importance of Greek language and culture in Greek society: 57% thought that migrants do not constitute a threat to Greek language³¹ and culture and 68% believe that migrants do not threaten the Christian Orthodox religion either. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (65%) believe that the presence of people of a different nationality, race or religion in a society is a good thing while only 19% disagree with this view. Here again we note a contradiction as we would expect those who believe that migrants threaten the authenticity of Greek culture to also believe that a multicultural reality is a bad thing. The analysis of the demographic data of the respondents suggest that those with higher education feel less of cultural threat and are more in favour of a multicultural society. Moreover, respondents from southern areas and the Peloponnese perceive the cultural ‘threat’ more acutely than those coming from northern areas. Respondents from the urban conglomerate of Thessaloniki are those who perceive less of a threat to cultural homogeneity and who are mostly in favour of a multicultural society, even more so than respondents from the Athens metropolitan area.

Comparing these recent results with the early findings of the EB surveys in the 1990s, we note a positive change in Greek attitudes towards immigrants/foreigners living in Greece. There is a general acceptance of immigrants although there are contradictory beliefs (and probably a lack of knowledge) on whether the immigrants’ impact on Greek economy and society is positive or negative. Moreover, there is a certain ambivalence about immigrants’ rights and the equality of Greek and foreign workers. This picture would suggest that Greeks perceive a certain conflict of interest between themselves and migrants (which, however, is only partly justified by studies actually documenting the impact of migrants on Greek labourers and on the overall well-being of Greek citizens) but hold no prejudice against them.

The media and public discourse on migration as well as the policies and practices of the state as outlined in the previous sections of this report suggest a more complex picture, however. We would need to dig deeper with an in-depth qualitative analysis of public opinion that has

²⁸ In an opinion survey conducted in 2003 among public administration employees, nearly 70% of the respondents thought that immigrants are responsible for the increase in the unemployment among Greeks (Getimis et al. 2003: 105).

²⁹ It is striking that in Getimis and collaborators (Getimis et al. 2003) study of public administration employees’ attitudes towards migration, nearly half of the respondents disagreed with this view. This indeed shows a significant change in public opinion on the matter, although it should be noted that the 2003 study concentrated on administration employees while the 2006 study was a survey of the general public (VPRC 2006a).

³⁰ In the 2003 opinion survey of Getimis and his collaborators (Getimis et al. 2003: 105-6), only 66% of the respondents thought that immigrants should have the same rights as Greeks.

³¹ Getimis et al. (2003: 105) note in their study that about 45% of respondents thought that immigrants threaten the ‘purity’ of the Greek culture and identity.

not taken place so far. It is worth noting, though, that a VPRC survey targeting public service employees only (VPRC, 2006b) conducted at the same time as the general survey on Greek respondents outlined above shows that public service employees have, on the whole, more positive attitudes towards migration and migrants than the general public. They score higher on questions regarding migrants' rights and migrants' acceptance as friends or relatives. They also score lower on questions about whether the presence of migrants in the streets or as neighbours bothers them or about whether migrants should be sent back to their countries of origin if they lose their jobs. They also feel less threatened than the general public in terms of their national identity and religion.

This survey was complemented by qualitative interviews (VPRC, 2006c) with a smaller number of representatives of public services that are of a general character (e.g., the Institute for Employment/OAED, the National Insurance Institute/IKA, the Centres Serving the Citizens/KEP) and with representatives of specialized agencies dealing with migration (e.g., the Institute for Intercultural Education/IPODE, the Institute for Migration Policy/IMEPO, the Ministry of Employment, the Foreigners' Directorate). It is worth noting that the majority of interviewees (and especially those working in offices of a general character) found that Greek society is not particularly racist or xenophobic and that any problems that may have existed in the past were related to the massive number of migrants that arrived and the inadequate design of regularization programmes. Some agencies (IKA for instance) attributed the blame to immigrants who were not 'always of the most correct behaviour' or 'were very demanding'. Generally, interviewees felt that these problems had been solved for the most part now and that Greeks were not racist in their ideology but had reacted xenophobically to a new reality in their home country. Among the specialized agencies, three responses are worth highlighting here. The respondent of the Ministry of Employment highlighted that Greeks are very racist and very xenophobic but because this is such a disorganized country, they cannot get their act together and set up a racist party or committee. S/he also suggested that s/he saw racism and discrimination as deeply entangled with unemployment. If there is a situation of economic crisis, there will be xenophobia and racism. The IPODE and IMEPO respondents suggested that it is only a matter of time and, with some education, Greeks will learn not to be xenophobic while migrants of the second generation will become fully Greek, and hence there will be no reason for concern or for instigating xenophobia. They generally thought that xenophobia and racism were not widespread in Greece, quite the contrary, 'Greeks are among the least racist peoples in the EU' and that Eurobarometer survey results are simply wrong. The IPODE interviewees noted that racism and discrimination concerns mainly Albanians while Greeks are traditionally a hospitable people. S/he does not however explain why there is a problem with Albanians, leaving open the option that Albanians are to blame for their plight.

Indeed these qualitative findings present a much bleaker picture regarding public opinion on migration in Greece and tend to suggest that the quantitative findings are misleading. Or, at least, that respondents experience some sort of cognitive dissonance: when asked to respond to a question with a closed set of answers they are more progressive and open-minded (or they censor themselves) while, when they are free to express their views, they tell a different story. This kind of incongruence between survey results and qualitative research findings has been identified in earlier studies on Italian public attitudes on Eastern Enlargement: EB surveys noted positive attitudes but a small qualitative study suggested otherwise (Triandafyllidou 2008).

9. Parties, Trade Unions and Migration

Migration has not been a hot issue in election campaigns in Greece until now. While it has been, at times, a prominent question in the media, mostly in relation to criminality, and during public opinion surveys, migration is not an issue on which elections are won or lost, nor is it a priority for the government in power. While there has been a slight change in policies between the early policing law of 1991 enacted in great haste at the time by the Conservative party (in power between 1990 and 1993), the Socialist party that came in power in 1993 and held power continuously until 2004 also adopted rather hesitant policies in the field of migration. It took several years of discussion until the first regularisation programme was voted on in 1997 and enacted in 1998. And it took three more years after that, until 2001, for a comprehensive law on migration to pass in Greek Parliament.

The then Minister of Interior Vasso Papandreou³² promoted the law as a means to combat irregular migration, cater to the needs of the Greek labour market and overall protect Greek society from a deregulated situation of massive undocumented migration. The ruling party also argued that the law and policy of the previous government had failed to address the challenges of migration (Mavrodi 2005). The law was also promoted as responding to Greece's international and mainly EU obligations and recognized the international character of the migration phenomenon. The Conservative party in opposition contested the already meager provisions on immigrant integration and argued in favour of more stringent controls (Mavrodi 2005: 16), however the gap between the two main parties' views was not that large. Indeed, as Mavrodi demonstrates (2005), the law actually paid little attention to EU migration legislation development soon after the Amsterdam Treaty came into force in 1999. It concentrated instead on short-sighted regulation of migration through restrictive legal migration channels and a large regularisation programme. The national plan for migrant integration was largely forgotten or remained inactive in the run-up to the Olympic Games (see also Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2005). Although the parliamentary proceedings suggest a certain discrepancy in the views of the two main parties regarding migration, in reality their views were largely in agreement. After all, law 2910 of 2001 introduced no landslide changes to the migration policy domain – it reactive measures seeking to respond to the challenge of irregular migration and increasing the de facto integration of migrants into Greek society and its economy without any long-term pro-active perspective on migration management. The two main parties were largely in agreement on their short-sighted and instrumental view of migration policy, seemingly unaware of how ineffective it was (Triandafyllidou 2005). Indeed, migration occasionally made the headlines of the press (see also section 7 above) or made the prime-time evening news, usually in relation to criminality, but was not a central issue in Greek politics.

In this context, it was only left-wing NGOs and the gradually emerging migrant associations that lobbied to put migration on the agenda. Contrary to the experience of other southern European countries, important national institutions such as the Church³³ were not particularly active in the area of migration. This may be because the Greek Church's network of voluntary social work is less developed than that of the Catholic Church in other countries. Moreover,

³² A prominent figure within the socialist party and one of the three party junior leaders supporting the Prime Minister at the time Costas Simitis (1996-2004) in his line of reforms.

³³ In Italy and Spain in particular the role of Catholic organizations such as Caritas and their local branches have been crucial in both addressing issues of assistance and integration where state services were insufficient but also in lobbying the government and mobilising civil society on questions of migrant integration and providing assistance to irregular migrants.

the leadership of the Greek Church, notably Archbishop Christodoulos (1998-2008), was much more interested in increasing his political power through mobilising the citizens for issues like the inscription of religion on national identity cards rather than in catering to the destitute, including irregular migrants, victims of human smuggling or trafficking. To put it bluntly, social work and solidarity with migrants was not a main topic on the Orthodox Church's agenda in this period.

It is actually quite surprising that the Greek Church did not even seek to attract the substantial number of co-ethnic and other migrants from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Russia who are Christian Orthodox. Although their participation in parishes of the centre of Athens is visible, priests or bishops have not approached them, nor did they contribute to the self-organisation or mobilisation of this part of the flock. It may be argued here that the close connection of Greek ethnicity with the Christian Orthodox religion prevents the Greek Church from having an Ecumenical vocation and addressing issues that contest the boundaries and composition of the nation such as migration.

Slowly, political elites have made steps towards recognising the positive contribution³⁴ of migrants to Greek society and the economy, although political parties are still slow to respond to the challenge of migration. The Socialist Party (main opposition party since 2004, 38% of the national vote in September 2004 and 40.5 % in 2004) has instituted, since 2005, three positions in its Central Party Committee that are reserved for migrants. These migrant members of the Party Committee are not citizens and hence have no right to vote in Greece. However, they provide for a direct representation of migrant groups in the main opposition party mechanism and indeed are carriers of dialogue and exchange in party and other social and political forums. This initiative has been called 'Friends of the Party' and migrants have been invited by the Party Chairman, Mr. George Papandreou, to join its ranks. Some politicians have criticised this initiative, though, as unconstitutional: migrants cannot be directly involved in politics since, according to the Constitution, this right is reserved for Greek citizens only. However, this has been only an exchange of opinion not an institutional response to the Socialist Party initiative.

This pro-immigration shift in the Socialist party policies and practices can be attributed to the personal views of the party leader George Papandreou as well as the related progressive views of academics and other prominent figures that he has recruited to the party electoral lists over the past four years. Only to name a few, these include University professor Marilena Koppa, an expert on minority rights in the Balkans and currently an MEP for the Socialist party as well as leader of the Socialist think tank ISTAME, University Professor Thaleia Dragona, responsible for the main education programme for the native Turkish Muslim minority of western Thrace, elected MP from the party list, MEP Kostas Mpotopoulos, Doctor in Law and former lawyer with a scholarly track record, and MEP Stavros Lambrinidis, a former lawyer in the US and a well-known public figure. It is thus clear that the fraction of the Socialist party that holds views in favour of immigrant integration and of a reconsideration of state policies in matters of immigrant political participation have been actively encouraged by the party leadership. Interestingly, informal contacts with immigrant activists confirm that the pro-immigrant initiative of the current party leader triggers further fermentation on migration

³⁴ For instance, Minister of Interior P. Pavlopoulos made a related declaration when he announced the most recent migration Act in January 2007 and the Prime Minister K. Karamanlis in his speech during the celebration of the Epiphany on 7 January 2008 noted that 'we appreciate the presence and work of those people who have come from foreign countries to live in our society and contribute to it'. The message was broadcasted on television live that morning.

issues among his internal rivals, who also approach immigrant activists in an effort to secure future votes also in addition to building a positive and progressive public profile among the centre-left wing voters.

The Socialist party put forward a series of very progressive positions, including automatic naturalisation of children born in Greece of foreign parents and preferential naturalisation (after 3 years) of children studying in Greek schools, teaching the language and culture of the country of origin in pre-school and in elementary schools, voting rights of migrants in local and regional elections, strengthening of labour inspections to guarantee immigrants' socio-economic rights and non-discrimination in employment, appointment of bilingual employees in public services that have large migrant clienteles, and the creation of Foreigners' Councils at the local level elected directly by migrants and affiliated with municipal councils. Moreover, the Socialist party put forward a set of even more progressive measures for co-ethnic migrants (Pontic Greeks and ethnic Greek Albanians), including measures to secure citizenship for all of them and quotas for enrolment in Universities as well as special programmes enhancing their employment and addressing their housing problems.

The Communist Party of Greece (which received 8% in the last election of September 2007, and nearly 6% in the 2004 election) included also a set of considerations that referred to migrant workers in their party platform for the September 2007 election, however these considerations were entirely embedded in a class struggle rationale. The party positions underlined solidarity among workers and the need to ensure employment, socio-economic rights and free education for all. Additionally, they also noted that they would promote family reunification and the regularisation of migrants who live in Greece with the simplification of the related administrative procedures as well as the teaching of the language and culture of their 'first homeland' to immigrant pupils and enhanced assistance to families and children regarding pre-school care.

The Coalition of the Democratic Left (5 % in the last election, a significant increase of its percentage from the 3.3% of the 2004 election) party platform was largely in agreement with the positions put forward by the Communist and the Socialist party promoting voting rights in local elections, mother tongue instruction in schools, improvement of socio-economic rights, naturalisation for the second generation, and regularisation of all migrants living in Greece. In addition, the Coalition of the Democratic Left promised to abolish border guards and the reception-detention centres for irregular migrants.

The extreme right wing LAOS party (which had no member in the Greek Parliament until September 2007 and only one member in the European Parliament) adopted a completely different view on the issue of migration. Its election programme noted a link between neighbouring countries as 'having claims on Greek territory', irregular migration, and oppression of Greek minorities in neighbouring states. It noted that Greece was under threat because of the demographic problem and the uncontrolled entry of foreigners to the country and that there was a risk for the nation posed by 'Great Albania' and 'Great Macedonia' plans in the Balkans. Thus, it argued that only migrants who had a work contract with an employer in Greece should be allowed to enter the country (which is actually the policy in place right now!) and that all migrants who serve a period in Greek prisons should be forced to return to their countries of origin after release from prison. The party made a clear distinction between Greek citizens and foreigners, noting that national solidarity and hence national funds should be used for the interest and well-being of Greeks, first and foremost, and not for aliens.

It is worth noting that the Conservative Party (in government since 2004 with 45% of the national election, and confirmed for another four-year period in September 2007 with nearly 42%) election platform, published on the party's web-site, included no positions on migration. This could suggest that migration was not an important issue for the government – but its legislation initiatives and most recent announcement of a plan for a National Migration Policy³⁵ suggests otherwise. A more plausible explanation is that the Conservative party sought to avoid any confrontation with other parties – and with LAOS in particular – on migration issues, by fear of losing right wing voters to the extreme Right.

Party platforms suggest that LAOS is a tiny minority directly opposing migration and arguing in favour of a chauvinistic and xenophobic policy. There seems to be broad agreement among the left and centre-left parties that migration is a good thing and that more liberal naturalisation laws should be implemented. In this context, it is no wonder that the Conservative party kept silent on the issue. It was clear during the last election that the Conservative party was forced to adopt a more nationalist position on issues such as the reform of textbooks for elementary schools with the goal of keeping its voters who had started sympathising with LAOS. At the same time, the party could not risk alienating centre-right voters who were clearly estranged by such extreme right-wing views.

During the last election campaign of September 2004, LAOS tried to bring migration onto the main agenda but other parties did not follow. Nationalism and the 'national interest' is a hot question in Greece, quickly arousing public feeling and usually leading to a cross-party alignment on 'national issues' such as the question of Cyprus membership in the EU in 2004, or currently (2007-08) the so-called Macedonian question and the membership of FYROM in NATO. Migration, however, has not been tinged by nationalism as a political issue and hence has remained in the margins of election campaigns. The LAOS extreme right wing party is the first to use migration as a pre-election campaign topic. Its electoral force is rather small: the party gained 2.19 % of the popular vote in the March 2004 election but was blocked from entry to Parliament since it did not pass the 3% threshold but, three months later, managed to gather 4.2% of the vote in the European election of June 2004 and hence sent one MEP to Strasbourg. In the last national election of September 2007, it reached 3.80% and hence managed to elect 10 MPs in the Greek Parliament.

Thus LAOS, although small and largely marginal in the Greek political system, appears to be on the rise and hence creates anxiety to the Conservative party New Democracy, currently in government with a thin majority of two MPs. LAOS thus may be able to influence migration policy not because of its electoral weight as such but through putting pressure on the incumbent Conservative party, which fears losing right-wing votes to LAOS. A quick search in the Parliamentary Proceedings shows that, since its entry into Parliament, LAOS has produced four parliamentary questions to the Minister of Interior on migration matters, framed in a largely xenophobic perspective, suggesting that the country is overwhelmed by increasing numbers of irregular migrants and that the demographic and cultural profile of urban centres is shaped by migrants and co-ethnic returnees that create an excessive burden for local authorities and public services (questions of 09.12.2007 and 12.02.2008).

In a recent effort to appease concerns of Human Rights organisations, NGOs and generally civil society about the mishandling of asylum and migration issues by the Greek authorities, the Minister of the Interior has published a detailed press release – a public letter addressed to

³⁵ See daily press, Naftemporiki, 5 March 2008, www.naftemporiki.gr/news/redirstory.asp?id=1484665

the President of the National Committee for Human Rights on 6 March 2008, which outlined all the concrete policy efforts that the state has undertaken to improve the HR record within Greece, to promote migrant integration, to protect asylum seekers, minors and trafficked persons, and also to control the national borders more effectively. In our view, the Conservative party is walking on a tight rope, trying not to lose conservative voters who may be lured by the xenophobic rhetoric of LAOS while at the same time responding both to the existing socio-political challenges as well as to mounting pressure from civil society and the European Union for more effective integration policies. Actually, the rather disappointing score of Greece on the Migrant Integration Policy Index³⁶ have exposed the inadequacy of the national integration policies and have probably prompted the ruling party to give more visibility to its efforts to rationalise and improve current migration management and control policies.

It is still too early to say (since LAOS entered the national parliament only in September 2007), whether and what kind of impact extreme right wing parties will have on Greek politics with regard to migration issues. One thing is clear, however, that the two main parties, the Socialists and the Conservatives, have, until now, adopted very similar policies when they were in government and that these policies were restrictive, dealing with migration as a necessary evil. A wind of change appears to have blown since 2004 and the Socialist party, alongside other left-of-centre parties, has espoused more progressive views on the issue. It remains to be seen, however, whether the party will be able to pass its positions through parliament or whether there is actually significant disagreement within the party on migration issues. Indeed, a closer look at the initiatives of specific MPs and MEPs suggests that there are pro-migration people in both the Conservative and the Socialist party, but that they are most likely to be a minority within each of the parties. The difference lies, probably, in the leadership of the two parties, where George Papandreou (Socialists) is more open to migration and cultural diversity than Kostas Karamanlis (Conservatives).

Overall, parties have not played a major role in migrant integration in Greece nor do they seem to have engaged in a contest or even a dialogue over different options for the national migration policy. The role of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), the main trade union platform in Greece, has been much more decisive and prominent. GSEE has been vocal on issues of migrant admission, and the related legal and bureaucratic hurdles that migrants have been facing since the mid-1990s. The research centre of the Confederation (INE GSEE) has published several policy papers or communications on migration issues (Linardos Rylmond, 1995; Katsoridas, 1996; Kollias and Katsoridas, 1999). GSEE has been dominated by the Socialist Party since the 1980s, when the Socialists first came to power. It remains, however, an important agent in civil society, symbolizing, in the Greek context, the power of labourers to contest government decisions and shape policies. Moreover, GSEE is also seen as an important partner in industrial relations since its structure and funding allow the confederation to have offices in all parts of Greece and to develop scientific expertise on issues of labour, migration, welfare, pension reform and overall social policy.

Against this background, the recent cooperation between GSEE and the Hellenic Forum of Migrants, the major federation of migrant organisations in Greece, in an EQUAL programme should not be underestimated. The two organisations have jointly won an EQUAL project and have organised information and assistance desks for migrants within regional GSEE offices in six major Greek cities. Our own fieldwork (Int. 9) as well as contextual knowledge from

³⁶ <http://www.integrationindex.eu/integrationindex/2401.html>

academic and policy conferences, suggests that GSEE is currently seeking actively to shape migration policy towards socio-economic incorporation, equality, and the dismantling of bureaucratic hurdles. The Confederation has recently suggested that stay permits should no longer be dependent on welfare stamps proving legal employment as this is not the appropriate way to fight the informal labour market (Int. 9). It has called thus, on one hand, for more generous stay permit concessions and, on the other hand, for more effective efforts to combat informal employment among both natives and migrants.

Smaller trade unions such as the Communist Party-led federation of trade unions PAME, Labour Centre of Athens (EKA), or the Union of Construction Workers of Greece were ambivalent towards migration during the 1990s. During those years, they supported the rights of co-ethnic returnees from the former Soviet Union and informally protected ethnic Greek Albanians from deportation, when they were caught working without papers, but overall did not put pressure on the government with regard to migration policy (Triandafyllidou, 2001). This lack of concerted action can be explained by the fact that immigrant workers were largely unwelcome competitors for manual jobs (especially construction) as they accepted work for lower wages (Lianos et al., 1994). In recent years, these trade unions have become more vocal on migrants' rights and they have been very vocal against the exploitation of irregular migrant workers in agriculture during the last months. However, their institutional support for the migration movement remains limited.

In this panorama of socio-political actors, the absence of the employers' association is notable. Although in other southern European countries, pressure from employers has been crucial in shaping migration management policies and even regularisation programmes, in Greece, the Union of Greek Industries (SEB, *Σύνδεσμος Ελληνικών Βιομηχανιών*) is absent from the debate. It is, however, worth noting that SEB has only about 500 members, which mainly include large industries and service companies, while the bulk of Greek enterprises are small and medium. These enterprises are represented by the General Federation of Professionals, Small Manufacturers and Merchants of Greece GSEVEE (*Γενική Συνομοσπονδία Επαγγελματιών Βιοτεχνών Εμπόρων Ελλάδας, ΓΣΕΒΕΕ*) union which numbers more than 5,000 members. Notably, this union too is largely absent from the migration policy debate. Migrants' contribution to the Greek labour market and economy as well as their special skills or needs or the patterns of their incorporation into the Greek economy has largely gone without comment from the employers' unions.

10. Social Integration Policies

During the course of our fieldwork (November-December 2007), the department of Social Integration that forms part of the Ministry of the Interior was upgraded to a Directorate and staffed with new people, some of whom had completed graduate studies in the field of migration. Our interviewees (Int. 12) argued that the current emphasis on migrant integration alongside economic migration management and border control is the result of a set of factors. First, it responds to EU priorities and other member state policies on migrant integration. Second, it relates to the hard work and positive attitudes towards migration by middle-ranking officials in the Ministry during the last years. Third, it suggests that the time is ripe in Greece for an emphasis on integration policies.

The tasks of the new Directorate include designing and implementing Greece's migrant integration policy (Int. 12). For this purpose it will collaborate with other public or private institutions (such as NGOs or immigrant associations) in order to carry out studies and programs and supervise their implementation. The Ministry launched (in the summer of 2007) a major policy programme called '*Estia*,' which targeted both public and private agencies that wish to work on immigrant integration. However due to financial constraints the programme remained largely on paper. The European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (2007-2013) has given new impetus to the integration policies of the Greek government and in particular of the new Directorate, however, their concrete output has not yet materialised.

An important component of immigrant integration initiatives has been provided by the EQUAL programme, funded by the European Social Fund, aiming to promote the European strategy for employment also includes immigrants in some of its actions. EQUAL is basically an 'experimental' program and therefore its main aim is not to directly relieve those in need but to create good practices that can later be incorporated into the main programs (Int. 7). Nevertheless, about 8,500 immigrants have benefited from EQUAL programs aiming to facilitate their access or return to the labour market and the development of entrepreneurial spirit. Moreover, more than 7,000 asylum seekers have benefited from measures for their social and professional integration.

10.1 Housing Policies

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the National Foundation for the Reception and Resettlement of Repatriated Greeks (EIYAPOE), an organization supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, took several provisions for the accommodation of repatriated co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union. EIYAPOE also supported Greek co-ethnics who lived in Albania, but the Greek state did not make any effort to provide similar support to other immigrant groups (*Διεθνής Αλληλεγγύη* [International Solidarity], January-March 2008: 8).

After 2001, immigrants who work and pay taxes in Greece had the same rights as Greek workers, and they can benefit from the housing program of the Organisation of Labour Housing (OEK) as long as they fulfil certain requirements that also apply to Greek workers. This specific housing program is supervised by the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection and it gives immigrants the opportunity to either receive a monthly rent subsidy or reside in public (labour) housing (see *Eleftherotypia* 10.11.2001). Interestingly enough, the first two Albanian citizens who managed to gather the necessary number of insurance stamps in order to get a housing loan from OEK did so in 2006, while they had been insured and

worked legally since 1998 (*Διεθνής Αλληλεγγύη* [International Solidarity], January-March 2008: 9).

The requirements for the beneficiaries of the program for 2007 are the following: the yearly income of their family should not exceed the amount of 11,500 euros, they should have rented their main residence in 2006 and not have owned a house anywhere in Greece, and, finally, they and their dependent family members should not have already received a loan or housing from OEK or a housing loan from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Social Insurance. They also must have worked at least 120 days in the last three years and their dependent employment must be continuing in 2007. The repatriated political refugees have the right to 'buy' part or all of the required working days. Finally, for the immigrants of Greek descent from the former Soviet Union, the number of necessary working days varies according to their zone of settlement. In other words, they are encouraged to settle in less densely populated areas without being denied the opportunity to settle in urban areas.³⁷

10.2 Antidiscrimination Policies

Law 3304/2005, voted on in January 2005, incorporates the so-called Race and Employment Directives (RED) into Greek legislation. However, the implementation of the law is lagging (Antigone Annual Report, 2007) as individuals that may have suffered discrimination and the stakeholders involved (labour inspectorates, NGOs, local authorities, trade unions) largely ignore the content and provisions of the law. Information campaigns were planned for this purpose by the Ministry of Employment in spring 2007 in coordination with actions organised in the context of the European Year for Equal Opportunities (2007). Baldwin-Edwards (2006) notes that immigrants in Greece occupy the lowest positions on the labour market and the antidiscrimination laws are not adequate to change this situation. The reason for that is that the Greek labour market functions mostly based on social networks, he argues (*ibid.*).

Nick Drydakis and Minas Vlassis, through an interesting study, exposed the fact that low-skilled male Albanians face unequal treatment in the Greek labour markets with regard to their wage, the prospect of being registered with insurance coverage and predominantly in access to occupation (Drydakis & Vlassis, 2007). In addition, another study by Drydakis shows that Albanians face discrimination in the rental market as well, but in a much lesser degree (Drydakis, 2007).

As the representatives of the General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE) pointed out (Int. 9), the only way for immigrant workers to be protected from such discriminatory behaviour is to know their rights. Inspections in work places are rare and often the immigrants themselves are not in a position to recognize discrimination and therefore report it.

10.3 Naturalization

Jus Sanguinis is the only way to acquire Greek citizenship at birth, thus second, or even third-generation immigrants are not entitled to Greek citizenship at birth unless their parents have been naturalised. Law 2130/1993 foresees that immigrants who wish to become Greek citizens have to be residents in Greece for more than ten years in the last twelve calendar

³⁷ See http://www.oek.gr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=416&Itemid=100.

years. This is one of the longest residence requirements for naturalisation in Europe.³⁸ Law 2910/2001 (articles 58-64) has made the conditions and procedure even more cumbersome, introducing an application fee that today stands at 1,500 Euro. In addition to that, authorities are not required to reply within a specified period of time and need not justify a negative decision to the applicant.³⁹ If an applicant is rejected, s/he may apply again after one year.

These articles (58-64) have been subject to severe criticism by NGOs, the liberal press⁴⁰ and international organisations (ECRI 2004) for being discriminatory and unfair.⁴¹ ECRI in particular has raised concerns regarding the preferential path to citizenship available to individuals of Greek origin, noting that there are subjective elements in the assessment of such origin, making the applicants liable to discrimination. Also, ECRI (2004, paragraph 64) notes that such distinctions between presumed co-ethnics and others create uncertainty among the latter and false expectations among the former with regard to the kind of rights and/or treatment that they are entitled to.

Between 1980 and 2003, 66% of the foreign citizens who obtained Greek citizenship were of Greek descent and only 34% of them were of foreign ethnicity. The balance started changing after 1997, and the numbers of co-ethnics who are granted Greek citizenship started becoming smaller than those of non co-ethnics (Pavlou, 2004). In November 2006, a joint decision by the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs facilitated the naturalisation procedure for ethnic Greek Albanian citizens, waiving the fee and the discretionary character of the judgment: the holders of a Special Co-Ethnic's Identity Card (see below for more information on these cards) will be granted naturalisation if they fulfil the requirements provided in the law. As a result, in 2007, the first year after the ministerial decision, the number of EDTO holders who acquired Greek citizenship was almost a hundred times higher than in any previous year (see table 10.1).

Table 10.1: Acquisition of Greek citizenship by EDTO holders (1998-2007)

Number of naturalisations of EDTO holders (per year)									
1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
56	69	66	58	52	36	23	66	68	5,634

Source: Ministry of Interior, letter dated 13.3.2008

³⁸ Many European countries request five years of residence before applying (United Kingdom or France, for instance), while the more restrictive ones require eight (Germany) or ten years (Italy). It is also worth noting that trends differ. More restrictive countries moved towards more liberal regimes of naturalisation (e.g., Germany with the 2000 citizenship law) while more liberal ones, like France, adopted more stringent legislation (citizenship law of 1993).

³⁹ A special circular of the Home Affairs Ministry (Circular 32089/10641/26.5.1993) states that such obligations of fair administration are not valid when the matters treated refer to the acquisition, recognition, loss or re-acquisition of the Greek nationality, rendering thus the whole issue truly exceptional and outside the normal work proceedings of state administration.

⁴⁰ See, *Ios tis Kyriakis*, Athens daily, *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotipia*, 4 January 2004, www.enet.gr/ and Athens Anglophone daily *Athens News*, 7 January 2004, Citizenship backlog, by Kathy Tzilivakis, www.athensnews.gr. Also Greek Helsinki Monitor at www.greekhelsinki.gr/bhr/english/index.html.

⁴¹ Greek authorities are generally required to respond within specified time limits to applicants addressed to them and to provide justification for their decisions.

10.4 Education Policy

Intercultural education made its first appearance in Greece in the 1970s in order to serve the children of return migrants, mainly from Germany but also from the USA, Canada, Australia and South Africa. In the beginning of the 1990s, the influx of co-ethnic repatriates from the former Soviet Union and Albania but also that of immigrants from Southeast Europe and the former Soviet Republics renewed the need for intercultural education. This need was mostly addressed with ‘reception classes’ incorporated to the mainstream school system, focusing mostly on Greek language, history and culture. (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2007)

So far, the use of the foreign students’ mother-tongues has been neglected and the differences in the students’ linguistic backgrounds that may affect their educational needs have been ignored. In other words, Greece’s approach to intercultural education has, until now been an ‘assimilationist’ one (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2007).

Moreover, there seems to be a lack of channels for the information to flow from the schools to the Ministry of Education. As a result, Ministry officials are not aware of the challenges faced by students and educators with regard to the students’ integration into the school system. Of course there have also been good practices but they are mostly the result of initiatives taken by teachers or school directors. (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2007)

10.4 Employment, Adult Education and Language Learning Policies

Within the framework of the program ‘Employment and Professional Training’ conducted by the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, several actions are taken in order to ensure the promotion of equal opportunities and the social integration of socially sensitive groups including immigrants, refugees and repatriates. More specifically, at least 10% of all unemployed people who are benefited by training programs should belong to a socially sensitive group. In addition, one of the program’s five axes, Axis 2, is oriented only towards such groups (Int. 13).

The actions that are funded within the framework of the Axis 2 include supportive and preparatory services as well as counselling, programmes that fund employers who create new positions and the unemployed who start their own businesses, as well as completed interventions for the unemployed of special groups and areas or professions of high unemployment. The total number of immigrants, refugees and repatriates who benefited from ‘Employment and Professional Training’ is 21,430 people, and more than half of these took advantage of the opportunity to have Greek language courses as part of the preparatory services offered.

The Ministry of Education, and more specifically the General Secretariat of Adult Education, have an educational program for teaching Greek as a second language to foreign workers. This program is separated into four levels and the courses of the highest level also include information on Greek history and culture.⁴² According to data given to us by the General Secretariat of Adult Education, between November 2004, when the program started, and June 2008, 14,398 people were trained through this program.

⁴² Information drawn from the General Secretariat for Adult Education website: www.gsae.edu.gr

An immigrant, in order to be eligible for passing the language certification exams⁴³ that are necessary for establishing the status of long term resident, must have followed the Greek language program of the General Secretariat for Adult Education⁴⁴. The logic behind the connection of the long term residence status and the Greek language courses was to aid the immigrants themselves since they would have additional motivation to follow this program and, by doing so, they would improve their position in the labour market (Int. 12).

There has been criticism mostly because of the small number of immigrants that have taken these courses and the fact that the access to the exams is not open to foreigners who have learned Greek through other channels. In addition, there have been problems even for those who have managed to enroll in the courses. Recently, for instance, the Institute of Continuing Adult Education (IDEKE) was not able to find an appropriate space to conduct the courses in Piraeus, keeping 300 prospective students waiting.⁴⁵ At the same time, a number of volunteer organizations offer free Greek language courses for several years, without facing similar problems, but they do not benefit from access to the exams.⁴⁶

⁴³ The level that it corresponds to is A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF)

⁴⁴ With the exception of those who have already obtained a level B certificate by the Center of Greek Language of the University of Thessaloniki or a level C or D certificate from the Institute of Continuing Adult Education.

⁴⁵ Report in Athens daily *Eleftherotypia* on 9.11.2007 and 14.11.2007.

⁴⁶ Reports in Athens daily *Eleftherotypia* on 26.11.2007, 23.12.2007 and 15.4.2008.

11. Concluding Remarks

This report provides for an overview of the migration phenomenon in Greece during the past 15 years. We have provided for data and estimates of legal and irregular migrants that currently reside in Greece, we have analysed their demographic and socio-economic features and we have commented upon their insertion and mobility within the domestic labour market. The second part of the report has concentrated on the evolution of Greek migration policy – we have critically discussed the main weaknesses of the dominant restrictive approach to economic migration in Greece and the main problems in the implementation of migration laws and regularisation programmes. In the third and fourth parts of the report, we discuss the positions of the main political parties and trade unions to put the migration policies into their political and social context.

The study shows that migrants find themselves in a trap due to the complexity of the stay permits issuing and renewal process, and the tight connection between their stay and their employment status proven by their welfare contributions. They paradoxically find themselves at the mercy of exploitative employers because they need the insurance and the stamps to issue/renew their permits but often have to pay for these themselves as they are afraid that, if they lose their job, they will also lose their means of subsistence and their welfare registration. At the same time, the short duration of stay permits (they are renewed for one or two years for the first ten years of legal residence in Greece, after which one can apply for a permit of indefinite duration. Currently such permits number fewer than 500) and the long delays of the process put them in a position of semi-legality, as many among them live most of their lives with only the ‘blue receipt’ proving they submitted a complete application for a permit, rather than the permit itself. By the time the permit is issued, they have to apply again because it is nearly expired. Thus, immigrant workers and their families live in a state of legal ‘limbo’, under constant pressure to secure their welfare stamps to be able to renew (not really) their permit but rather their receipt of application for a permit.

Our study suggests that migration management is fused with migration control in Greece. In effect, the tools of migration management (the regularisation process for undocumented migrants, the invitation for legal migrant labourers and the issuing and renewal of stay permits for work purposes) substitute for ineffective even if at times harsh policies and practices of migration control (controls at the border, enforcement of deportations, internal controls). In this context, the notion and principle of ‘legality’ becomes central to the management of migration. Although legality does not mean abiding by the law but rather taking part in a network of individuals and institutions that broker ‘legality’. They broker the ‘papers’ that the migrant needs. The migrant has to become part of these networks in order to achieve this administrative legality that legitimises not the rule of law but rather the ‘clientelistic’ norms and practices of Greek society.

The impossibility of having a secure legal status, being in possession of a mid-term permit (valid for instance for 5 years) that one actually has in one’s hands (rather than the application receipt) and the constant need to prove one’s employment through the welfare stamps so that one succeeds in renewing, at frequent intervals, one’s permit, becomes ultimately a form of controlling legal migration. This system, however, contributes to creating irregular migration. Legal migrant workers are under constant pressure by the state and their employers while their socio-economic rights are also in danger. It is frequent that they fall to illegal status and, since employers have an interest in exploiting them and the overall migration management

system is in a mess, they are able to survive with undocumented status as exploited workers in the Greek informal economy.

At the same time, the failure of the invitation procedure in regulating economic migration contributes to increasing pressures for irregular border crossings or visa abuse by migrants. The fact that the labour migration management system is not working properly allows for those who abuse the duration and purpose of their visas to go relatively unnoticed. At the same time, internal controls do not follow any specific plan, apparently, but instead adapt to pressures by local employers in need of foreign workers so that police force tolerates their presence even if they are not legal (Psimmenos and Kassimati, 2002). Our study suggests that the management authorities (Ministry of the Interior, Department of Permits and the Ministry of Labour) do not coordinate their efforts with the Police and Border Guard Forces (which also belong to the Ministry of Interior) either. There does not seem to be a fluctuation in border controls during or after a regularisation programme that would confirm the political will of the government to regularise those who are in the country and control illegal entries.

There is also a concern here with regard to the enforcement practices of police and coastguard officers who appear negligent with the human rights of illegal aliens apprehended at the border in the effort to extract information about smugglers. Moreover, it appears that irregular forced returns to the other side of the Greek Turkish border (i.e., to Turkey) also take place along the northeastern and southeastern borders of Greece, probably in an effort to put pressure on Turkey to put into effect the Protocol for Readmission that it has signed with Greece in 2004.

In conclusion, it is our contention that current Greek migration policy leads to the following unintended or at least undeclared objectives. It controls legal migration more than irregular migration and it shapes irregular migration to meet the needs of the domestic labour market rather than holding it in check. This paradoxical blend of management and control policies allows for the state to manage migration in ways that are extremely flexible and adaptive to the needs of an economy with important structural imbalances.

The Greek economy is characterised by a small industrial and high-tech sector, a limited first sector (agriculture) and an expanded service sector in areas of seasonal (tourism, catering) and informal (cleaning, care-taking) employment. Moreover, its small second sector is dominated by small enterprises of low capital investment that depend on cheap and intensive labour to survive in conditions of increased competition. Migrants coming to integrate into this type of economy become the necessary cheap and flexible labour force that allows for the survival of the primary job market. However, since undocumented migration is neither viable nor acceptable in any western democracy, a new concept of legality is 'invented.'

The 'legal status' of the migrants is indeed a new concept that does not reflect the fact that migrants abide by the law. It is nearly impossible for many, if not most, immigrants to respect fully the conditions set out in the law for the issuing/renewal of their permits. The 'papers' are a subject-producing document that make the person legally recognizable and that 'make and unmake legally the persons to whose dates of birth, lives and other matters they refer (Cabot, 2008). However, in the context of the Greek bureaucratic machinery, these 'papers' lose their role as instruments or tools of governmental power and eventually acquire a meaning and value of their own. This value is less a use value (to paraphrase Marx) and more an exchange value: they become the object of exchanges between the legally constructed subject: the immigrant (with or without papers), the public administration institutions and individual

actors, and the networks (political, 'clientelistic' and sometimes overtly corrupt) that surround the Greek bureaucracy.

The 'legal status' reflects a 'clientelistic-cum-administrative' *arrangement* whereby the letter but not the substance of the law is applied. The migrant is never able to fulfil all the conditions required by the law but s/he still receives at some point her/his stay permit and sometimes manages to renew the permit or falls back into undocumented status awaiting for the next regularisation programme. What the migrant actually achieves is a *fiction* of legality in which the conditions of the law are *bypassed* rather than fulfilled. To bypass the law, however, one needs to take part in the network of 'legality' that includes welfare agencies, employers, trade unions, employees, lawyers, local authorities, regional offices, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labour and even the migrants' own embassies alongside a wide network of personal acquaintances that help make the connection between all these offices so that the 'legal status' that is, however, neither fully legal nor secure, is achieved. There is a need actually to explore further, in future research, the nexus between media and political discourses regarding the condition and idea of (il)legality of migrants, to de-construct it and to analyse how it relates to a wider construction of the immigrant as a political and economic subject without rights, but to whom 'favours' are made by the 'hospitable' and 'equality-minded' Greek citizens and state.

Under these circumstances, the question of migrants' rights and migrant integration becomes marginal as the very legal status of migrants continues being insecure and unstable after 5 or even 10 years of residence in the country (see also Düvell 2006). In these conditions of post-industrial flexibility and insecurity, integration becomes a 'present' or perhaps a 'prize' that the state and the society of settlement may or may not concede to the newcomers. Naturalisation is 'offered' only to those of ethnic Greek origin, under certain conditions and following a specific 'hierarchy of Greekness' (Triandafyllidou and Veikou, 2002). It is a prize for one's origin and not a quality that one can achieve through her/his social and economic participation in Greek society.

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Website of the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection: <http://www.ypergka.gr/>

Website of Greek Helsinki Monitor: www.greekhelsinki.gr/

Website of General Secretariat for Adult Education: www.gsae.edu.gr

ANNEX I: List of Interviews

Int.1 Male Employee, Ministry of Mercantile Marine, Security Department, Athens, 11 October 2007

Int.2 Two Female Employees, Ministry of Interior, Department of Stay Permits A', Athens, 17 October 2007

Int.3 Male Employee, Ministry of Interior, Secretariat of Public Order (former Ministry of Public Order), Directorate of Greek Police, Director of Aliens' Office for the Greek Police, Athens, 2 November 2007

Int.4 Male and Female Employee, Ministry of Employment, Department of Employment, Director and Head of Department of department for the employment of aliens, Athens, 31 October 2007.

Int.5 Female Employee, Municipality of Athens, Director, Centre of Services for Aliens (KEA), Athens, 31 October 2007.

Int.6 Male Employee, Municipality of Tavros, Director, Athens, 20 November 2007

Int.7 Two Female Employees, Heads of Department for the implementation of the EQUAL programmes, Ministry of Employment, Athens, 12 November 2007.

Int.8 Female Employee, Head of Regional Labour Inspectorate (SEPE), area of Anoixi, northern Athens, 22 November 2007

Int.9 Male, Representative of Confederation of Greek Labourers (GSEE) and Labour Centre of Athens (EKA), Athens, 27 November 2007.

Int.10 Female Employee, Athens Regional Offices, Athens, 14 December 2007

Int.11 Male, Assistant Greek Ombudsman, Head of Human Rights Department, Athens, 17 December 2007.

Int.12 Female Employee, Ministry of Interior, Directorate (former Department) of Social Integration, Athens, 19 December 2007.

Int. 13 Four Female Employees, Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, Special Service of Management of the Program 'Employment and Professional Training', Athens, 12 February 2008