

THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION OF GREECE SIZE, SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES AND LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

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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: Net Migration in Greece during the post-war period

Period	Net Migration		
	Greek Citizens	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 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 between Greece and Pakistan during the 1970s (Tonchev, 2007). Nevertheless, in 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 is 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 in 1991 and focused mostly on stricter controls at border areas while making the legal entrance and settlement of foreigners who aimed at working 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 voted 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 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 a view to simplifying procedures.

In this paper I present briefly the socio-demographic profile of the immigrant population of Greece and outline the labour market insertion of the different migrant groups commenting on the nature and length of their settlement in Greece. The paper concentrates on the regular migration and does not discuss the important and thorny issue of status insecurity nor the problems of Greek migration management policies.

2. Main Demographic Features

2.1 The Size of the Immigrant Population

According to the last census of the National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), that has taken place in 2001, there were 797,091 foreign residents in Greece at that time. 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 raises up to 900,000 approximately.

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 1, below).

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

Data obtained from the Ministry of Interior in December 2007 show that in mid-October there were 481,000 stay permits in force for non-EU25 citizens. In a recent research interview (Int. 2) a Ministry of Interior officer estimated the number of permits currently in process (hence not included in the aforementioned 480,000) by municipal and regional offices 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 2 below we use this more conservative estimate to calculate the total immigrant stock in Greece today.¹

Permits that are being processed do not appear in the Ministry of 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)² issued before each holiday period. This happens because Greek authorities are aware of the long delays (that last in the best of cases 3 months and in the worse of cases over a year) that many migrants experience in the issuing/renewing of their stay permits³ by the relevant municipal, regional and Ministry of 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. 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 (*Voreioepiotes*) hold Special Identity Cards for *Omogeneis* (co-ethnics) (EDTO) issued by the Greek police. EDTO holders are not included in the Ministry of Interior data on aliens. In an article⁴ published in the English language weekly *Athens News* on 12 January 2007, journalist Kathy Tzilivakis states – quoting information provided at an interview by Minister of Interior Prokopis Pavlopoulos – that there are 28,850 naturalisation applications lodged by *Voreioepiotes* between 1990 and 2005, another 30,000 *Vorioepiotes* hold EDTO cards valid for ten years, 40,000 people hold EDTO cards valid for three years and there are about 100,000

¹ We are currently awaiting the results of an internal census of the Ministry of Interior (Aliens' Directorate) aiming at registering all the applications that are currently in process at the municipal and regional offices across Greece.

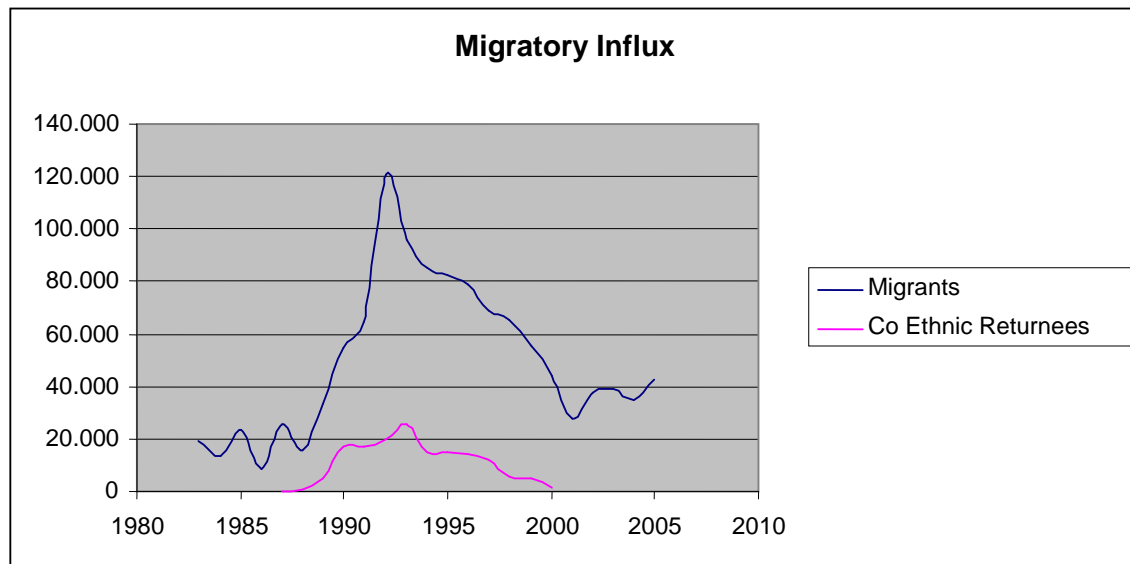
² These press releases state what kind of documents the migrant who wants to travel back to her/his country of origin needs to have with them in order to be re-admitted in Greece. See for instance the press release issued on Friday 23 November 2007 for the Christmas break of 2007 and the press release of 16 March 2007 for the Easter break of the same year.

³ This issue is discussed in more detail in the section on labour force management below.

⁴ *Athens News*, 12/01/2007, page: A15, Article code: C13217A152, available at www.athensnews.gr accessed on 27 November 2007.

applicants who still await to receive their EDTO cards. According to these data, ethnic Greek Albanians who reside in Greece reach a population of 200,000 approximately. Until now the Ministry of Public Order has refused to release data on the actual number of EDTO issued: these data are considered to be confidential because upon release they would show that there are hardly any ethnic Greeks still living in Albania (see also Pavlou 2003: 274).

Chart 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

Alongside the non EU citizens and the Voreioepiotes, 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, 152,204 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.

Table 2. Estimate of total immigrant stock in Greece, 2007

	Numbers	Source of data
Valid stay permits	480,000	Ministry of Interior, valid permits on 15 October 2007
Estimate of stay permits in process	250,000	Ministry of Interior, November 07
Estimate of co-ethnics from Albania holding Special Identity Cards (EDTO)	200,000	Minister of Interior quoted in the press, January 07
Co-ethnics from former Soviet Union	150,000	Census of General Secretariat for

(have received Greek citizenship)		Repatriated Co-ethnics, 2000
Irregular migrants	167,000	Author's own estimate – see below
Total (including co-ethnics)	1,347,000	
Total (excluding co-ethnics)	1,000,000	

In line with the above calculations we estimate the total immigrant stock in Greece at 1.18 million including co-ethnics from Albania and the Soviet Union. Kanellopoulos et al. (2006) estimate the number of irregular migrants in 2004 at 300,000. In the meantime however there have 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 or who held EDTO cards or who had seen their applications for permits or EDTO cards rejected and who resided in Greece before 31.12.2004. 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.

The second and most recent regularisation programme was enacted with law 3536/2007 (February 2007) which facilitated or simplified some of the welfare stamps⁵ 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). There are no data available as to how many people took advantage of these transitory provisions of law 3536/2007. we assume that the applications submitted under these last regularisation efforts are in their largest part included in the 250,000 estimated applications that are currently in process.

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 apprehended⁶ 'disappear' into the immigrant networks and informal labour market of Athens and Thessalonike despite the deportation order that they receive (see also

⁵ Applicants were required to prove 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 a view to allowing to immigrants with unstable jobs to 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 cash to the Greek welfare system. Law 3536/2007 gave an extra 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. In other words, this was not a regularisation programme proper but rather aimed at keeping into legality people who were obviously living and working in Greece for several years but who were unable to prove their employment. A Ministry of 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.

⁶ For a discussion of the border apprehension regime and what happens to the apprehended irregular migrants see section 5 below.

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 regularised. Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos (2007: 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 400,000 permits in process and that they are currently in Greece with irregular status. Thus we estimate that there are currently in Greece 167,000 irregular migrants (see Table 2 above).

Table 3: 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, in line with our calculations there are currently about 1 million immigrants in Greece excluding those of Greek ethnic origin (Pontic Greeks who have received citizenship and *Voreioipirotes* who hold EDTO cards) or 1.35 million if we also include co-ethnics. 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 in process 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.

2.2 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 is Bulgarians, but their percentage on the total migrant population is considerably smaller.

The following table contains data from the last census (2001) and from the Ministry of Interior concerning the number of stay permits that were valid in October 2007. The data of the Ministry do not include co-ethnics from Albania (EDTO holders) and their families as well as refugees and asylum seekers since these permits are issued by the Ministry of Public Order. In addition, the permits for EU citizens are also issued by the Ministry of Public Order and therefore the permits of Bulgarian and Romanian nationals that are included in the table have been issued before 2007.

Table 3. National Composition of the Migration Stock in 2001 and 2007

Country of Origin	Census 2001		Valid Permits October 2007	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albania	438,036	57.49%	303,225	62.97%
Bulgaria	35,104	4.60%	27,181	5.64%
Georgia	22,875	3.00%	12,990	2.69%
Rumania	21,994	2.88%	15,884	3.29%
USA	18,140	2.38%	-	-
Russia	17,535	2.30%	10,704	2.22%
Cyprus	17,426	2.28%	-	-
Ukraine	13,616	1.78%	19,005	3.94%
UK	13,196	1.73%	-	-
Poland	12,831	1.68%	-	-
Germany	11,806	1.54%	-	-
Pakistan	11,130	1.46%	12,126	2.51%
Australia	8,767	1.15%	-	-
Turkey	7,881	1.03%	1,005	0.20%
Egypt	7,448	0.97%	10,356	2.15%
India	7,216	0.94%	9,104	1.89%
Philippines	6,478	0.85%	6,644	1.37%
Italy	5,825	0.76%	-	-
Moldavia	5,718	0.75%	9,906	2.05%
Syria	5,552	0.72%	5,907	1.22%
Bangladesh	4,854	0.63%	4,682	0.97%
OTHER	68,385	8.97%	32,782	6.8%
TOTAL	761,813	100.0%	481,501	100.0%

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 2007 include only legal migrants with valid permits and exclude citizens from the EU25.

It is difficult to compare the data for 2001 with those of 2007 (table 2 above) because the census data (2001) include citizens from the EU-10 countries that joined in 2004 and from Romania and Bulgaria. At the same time they also include undocumented migrants since the census services made an explicit effort to register all aliens residing in

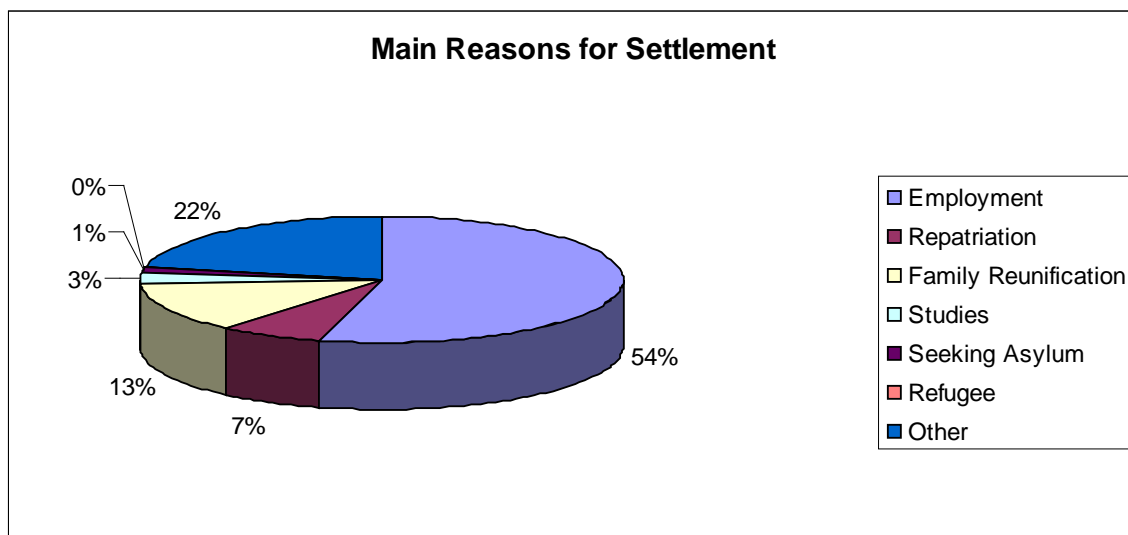
the country. It remains however unknown what percentage of the undocumented population was eventually registered in the census. The data for 2007 on the other hand, include migrants who hold valid permits and exclude citizens of the EU25 (not the EU27 since Bulgarian and Romanian citizens who are in Greece for work purposes receive permits under the non-EU citizen provisions until 2009). However, Table 1 gives 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 both in 2001 and in 2007, Bulgarians rise to nearly 8% of the legal migrants followed by Romanian (4.5%), Ukrainian (4.3%), Georgian (2.7%), Pakistani (2.5%), Russian (2.4%) and Moldovan (2.1%) citizens. All these groups have since 2001 doubled (or more than doubled) their percentage points in the total immigrant population. 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.

2.3 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 search of employment followed by family reunification while the percentages of asylum seekers and refugees were quite low (see Chart 2 below).

Chart 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 Ethnic, 2000: 52).

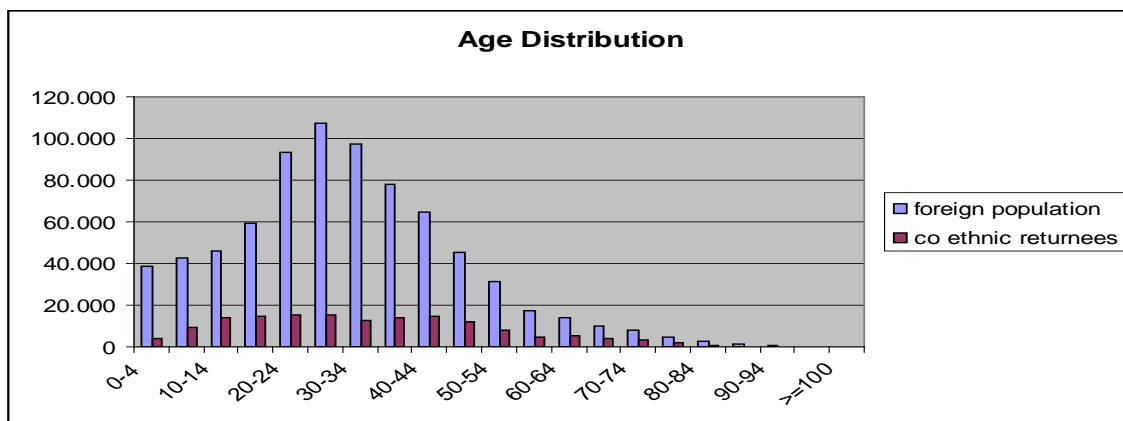
2.4 Gender⁷ and Age

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 related 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 in relation to 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 in a retirement age while the highest concentration is almost equally spread in the ages between 19 and 40 years old. More details on the age configuration of immigrants can be found in Chart 3.

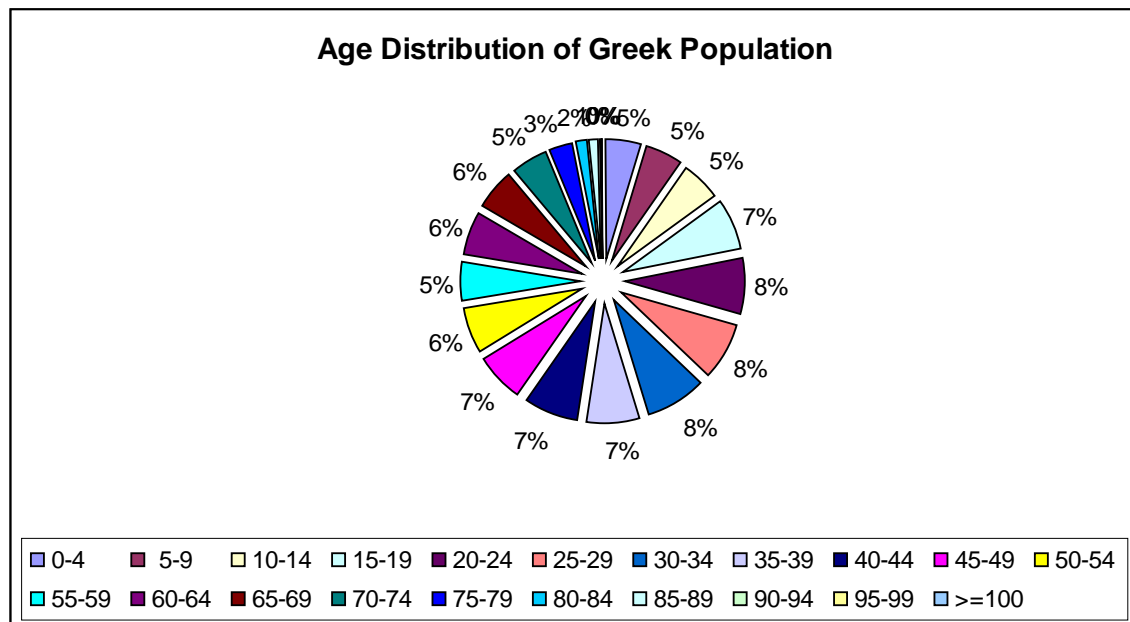
Chart 3: Age distribution of the foreigner population in Greece



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

⁷ 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.

Chart 4. Age distribution of the total Greek population



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Census 2001

By contrast, the age distribution pattern for the total Greek population is different (see Chart 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.

2.5 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 questionnaire used by the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co Ethnic, we have no information on their marital status but we have data on the composition of their families. Most of the families are composed by 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%). Using the data on family composition we can safely say that about 64% of the repatriated co ethnics are married, a percentage much higher than those of the total population and the foreign population (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co Ethnic, 2000: 56 and 58).

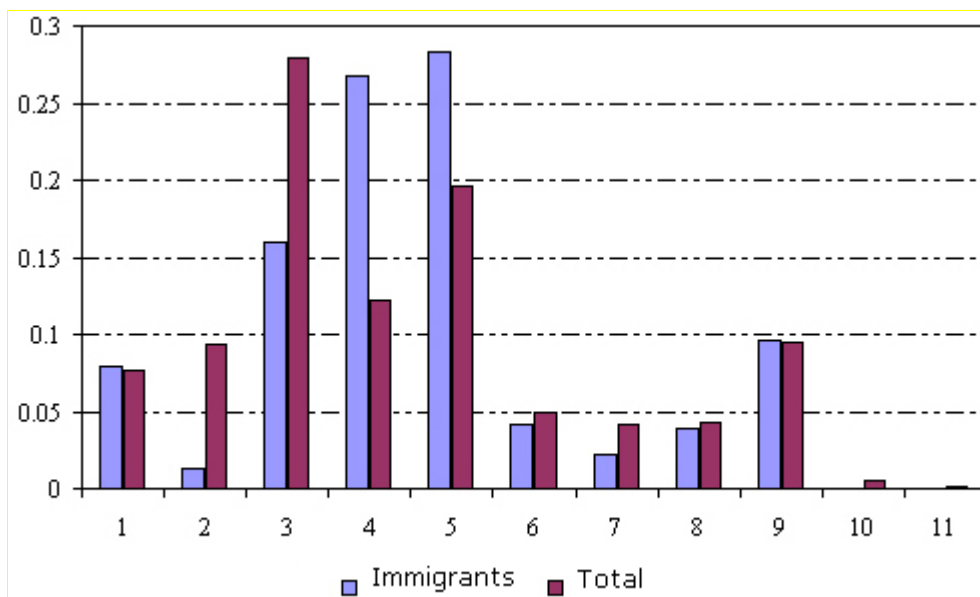
2.6 Educational Level

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 a great difficulty 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 their 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; 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).

Chart 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)

3. 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. The total unemployment rate was at 11.1% in 2000 with registered unemployed people reaching half a million people. However, there is a severe gender imbalance in this rate. The female rate of unemployment is nearly 17% and unemployment affects particularly women with secondary (17.3 %) and higher (10%) education. Overall, the participation rate in the workforce is relatively low by European standards (63% for men, 49.7% for women) (Baldwin Edwards 2001).

At first glance, it may come as a surprise that in the mid-1990s there was half a million of migrants employed in the Greek informal economy mainly. The explanation is relatively simple and unfortunately 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 the last decades and there is widespread participation in the tertiary and higher education. Thus, young Greeks prefer to wait for employment that conforms to their skills, meanwhile financially supported by their families, rather than take up a low prestige low skill and low pay job.

OECD comparative statistical data 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. Having a look 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 indicated the segmented nature of the Greek job market and the fact that immigrant employment was concentrated on specific economic sectors.

Empirical research on the insertion of immigrants in 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 to do.

Similar patterns of limited competition were shown by a study concentrating on the agricultural sector (Vaious 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 for 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 concentrating in the late 1990s paint a more complete picture of immigrant contribution in the Greek economy and in particular of their insertion in 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 (contained). Immigrants also contribute to an increase in the national production. As in two thirds of the cases, they take up jobs that natives reject, 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 by 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 the 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 but also in rural ones (where all categories benefit from the 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 a negative impact of the presence of immigrant workers.

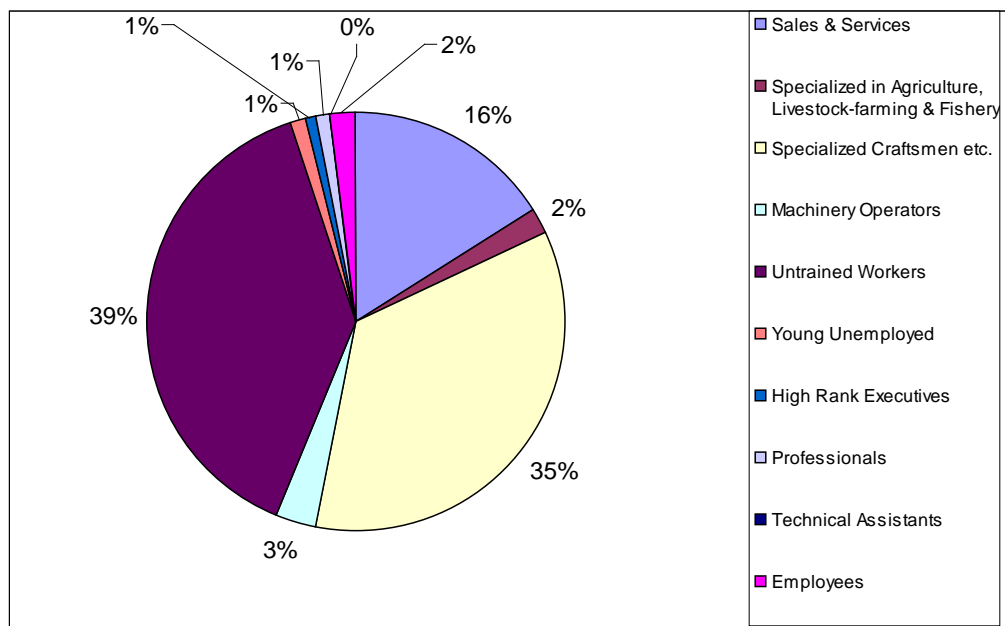
During the years 1999-2000 there was an increased demand for unskilled male workers for the construction sector and for women to be employed in cleaning and domestic care in the Athens area (Lianos, 2004). The demand for unskilled labourers was high in the years before the 2004 Olympic Games as many 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 at 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 census of 2001 (see Chart 6 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 to consume, 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 the consumption levels, in the second scenario there is overall a positive impact because of the increased consumption and production and because the newcomers create new jobs too, however, the earlier migrants suffer from increased competition and wages become overall lower. In the third scenario, assuming that migrants leave the country in three progressive waves 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.

Chart 6: Immigrant Insertion in 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, 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.

In the following sections we consider four groups of immigrations: first Albanian citizens as the largest national group within the immigrant populations, second, co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union as another large group for which we have sufficient data and that are in a different position from Albanians since they received citizenship upon arrival in Greece in the early 1990s. For the purposes of this paper, we group together migrants from Eastern European countries and those from developing countries (mainly Asia and Africa).

3.1 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.

3.2 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 Greeks⁸, the returnees faced serious problems in finding jobs, 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.

3.3 Bulgarians

Nearly three quarters of Bulgarian immigrants in Greece are women. Their most common first occupation has been live-in maids while men, upon their arrival, were usually occupied as untrained workers, mostly in construction. They are not a particularly young cohort: one third among 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 achieved 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

⁸ 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 Ethnic, conducted in 2000 (p. 64). For example 10% of the repatriated co-ethnics have 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%.

ended up not satisfying the welfare stamps requirement when the time came to renew their permits (Markova 2007).

According to the data of the census of 2001, the Bulgarians who resided in Greece were 35,104 and 60% 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 concentrated by the National Statistical Service show that in 2004 the Bulgarians who resided in Greece were 33,638 but for the years 2004 and 2005 approximately 12,500 Bulgarians were insured by IKA. The average wage of a Bulgarian is 46% lower than that of Greek workers but in the construction sector the difference is considerably smaller (6.3%).

3.4 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 the number of valid residence permits for Romanian citizens in October 2007 was nearly 16,000. This number however refers only to the Romanian citizens whose permits were issued for work purposes. Since 1 January 2007, stay permits for economically independent persons (i.e. people who need not work and actually are not allowed to work in Greece) and students are issued by the Ministry of Public Order as permits of EU nationals. Similarly renewals of stay permits for work purposes for Romanian nationals who already held such a permit and who are still employed are now issued as EU citizen permits. In other words, the Romanian population is currently divided between third country nationals' status and EU citizens' permits, depending on the type of permit requested and on the date of the first permit issued. Data from the National Insurance Institute (IKA) show that over 11,000 Romanians had been insured by that organization in 2005 and their average wage was 32% lower than that of Greek workers.

3.5 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 carers. It is important to note that the women from Albania who work as live-in maids are 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 are composed mainly by 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 has been a significant increase of the influx 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: Asian Immigrants in Greece

Main Groups	Census 2001	Percentage of Men	Permits (Oct. 2007)	Estimated Number*	Main Occupations
Pakistanis	11130	96%	12.126	40.000-50.000	Industries Constructions Services
Bangladeshis	4854	97%	4.682	12.000	Small Shops Restaurants
Filipinos	6478	24%	6.644	20.000	Domestic Workers
Indians	7216	93%	9.104	12.000-15.000	Agriculture Fishery

Source: Adapted from Tonchev, 2007: 17.

3.5.1 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 Interior regarding the number of valid residence permits for Ukrainian citizens in October 2007 was 19,000. Data from IKA show that a much lower number (approx. 2,000) of Ukrainian citizens were registered as dependent employees by the organization in 2005 and their average wage was almost half of that of Greek workers. Since there is a large proportion of Ukrainian women that work as live-in maids, it is highly likely that a large number among them remain undocumented and/or uninsured.

3.5.2 Pakistanis and Bangladeshis

The influx of Pakistani immigrants started during the 1970s, after a bilateral agreement of 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 are men who work mostly in manufacturing industries but also in the fields of construction and services.

Based on data of the Ministry of Public Order collected by the National Statistical Service more than 11,000 Pakistanis were residing in Greece in 2004 and 86% of them where insured by IKA according to data released by this last. However, data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) concerning the first trimester of 2006 register over 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 started 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 National Statistical Service show that approximately 4,000 Bangladeshis resided in Greece in 2004 and 72% of them were insured by IKA. Furthermore, according to data from IKA for December 2005 the average wage of a Bangladeshi worker was almost half that of a 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).

3.5.3 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 of their population after 1991 and their most usual occupation is domestic worker. There were 6,500 Filipinos registered at 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 IKA and data from the Ministry of Public Order collected by the National Statistical Service, there were approximately 4,000 Filipinos in Greece in 2004, and nearly 3/4s among them were insured at IKA. In addition, while the valid stay permits for Filipinos in October 2007 were 6,500, there are estimates that the Pilipino community numbers approximately 20,000 people (Tonchev, 2007:17).

3.5.4 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 census of 2001, more than 7,000 Indians resided in Greece. Nearly all of them (93%) were males and 92% among them had migrated for work purposes. Data from the National Statistical Service show that there were 7,000 Indians residing in Greece in 2004 and 64% among them were insured at IKA.

3.5 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 are settled in Athens and work in their own 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 are the most active nationality with over 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 ran by Asians in the Athens area with the actual size of these groups (a few 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.

3.6 An assessment of migrant insertion in the Greek labour market

The overview of the data and estimates presented above suggests a mixed picture on the evolution of migrant stocks and their insertion in the labour market. Data on regular migrants suggest that regardless of nationality, a significant percentage (ranging between 2/3s and 3/4s) 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 to assess 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 of Albanian men while Albanian women appear trapped in the three-C sector (cleaning, catering and caring) 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 carers. 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.

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 a view to explaining 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).