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IMMIGRATION IN GREECE DURING THE
1990'S: AN OVERVIEW

Maria Siadima

SUPERVISOR: Prof. Rory Miller

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ABSTRACT

Immigration in Greece has emerged as one of the major social issues with serious political and economic repercussions. This paper seeks to present the reasons –political, demographic, geographic and economic- for which Greece was selected as a destination country along with the rest of the Southern European Mediterranean Countries. Next, it seeks to sketch the geography of immigration in Greece and the position immigrants occupy in the labor market, providing thus a pragmatic basis for further discussion. The economic and social consequences of immigration will be addressed separately. Serious effort will be made to objectively view the implications for sides, Greece and the immigrants themselves. Continuously, we will discuss female trafficking and prostitution, a crucial characteristic of Greek immigration and how this issue is handled upon by the Greek state. At last, the Greek immigration policies of the last ten years will be surveyed and its results evaluated, with special focus on the last regularization program.

Introduction-the legacy of the past

Modern Greece has always been a country of emigration, similar to the rest of South Mediterranean countries. The two world wars and the 1947-1949 civil war stopped the country from evolving technologically and agriculture - the only sector available to the population- was not sufficiently large to absorb the Greek labour force. Unemployment became the most serious problem afflicting post war Greece, leading to serious economical repercussions. The solution proposed was intensive emigration. Between 1951 and 1881, 12 per cent of the Greek population emigrated to counties like France, Belgium and primarily to Ger-

many¹. One very basic characteristic of this emigration flow was its temporary nature. In post war years Greeks were employed as guest workers with contracts of limited time (that is the original meaning of the word, *gastarbeiter*, a pejorative used for all immigrants in Germany). Emigration was seen as a plausible solution with three- fold results: the confrontation of unemployment, the use of the remittances sent by the immigrants to stabilize the balance of payments and the acquirement of skills that could later be used in the Greek industry. At first, the results were very promising. The demographic problem was solved, while the Greek economy owed its high rates of development to the remittances from abroad. Later though, problems arose, since the rural areas were abandoned, and labor shortages were noted, both in agriculture and industry.² In addition, the immigrants did not really acquire any skills in the heavy industries of Northern Europe, because compartmentalized production prevented them from doing so.³

International events -the oil crisis of 1973 - and domestic ones -the restoration of democracy after seven years of dictatorship (1974) and the enhancement of the Greek economy- severely halted the emigration flow. Similarly, the Greeks, imitating the Spanish, Italian and Portuguese guest workers in the North of Europe started returning to their homelands. However, a substantial percentage decided to remain permanently to the guest country, and the South Mediterranean started importing labor from Africa to cope with the acute labor shortage in rural areas.⁴ Therefore, immigration in Greece is not such a local phenomenon; on the contrary, it characterizes the whole Mediterranean basin. It is true though that the demography of the immigrants is quite different in Spain, Italy and Portugal, depending always on the differing historical ties that these countries had with ex colonies. Spain, for instance, is host for a lot of Latin American immigrants (Spanish ex -colonies) and more recently of Moroccan and African ones (because of geographical proximity

¹ Sapelli, G., Southern Europe Since 1945- Tradition and Modernity in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey (London and New York: Longman, 1995), pp. 32, 36-37

² King,R., "Population Mobility: Emigration, Return Migration and Internal Migration", in Allan Williams (ed.), Southern Europe Transformed- Political and Economic change in Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain (London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1984), pp. 155-156

³ ibidem, p.155

⁴ , King, "Population Mobility", p.156

and political ties). Portugal has a large number of immigrants from the ex-colonies of Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Guinea, while Italy has Albanians, Ethiopians, and other immigrants.⁵ During the 1970's and 1980's, Greece, apart from some refugees and asylum seekers, it had some Polish, African, Egyptian and South Asian immigrants. Most of them had legal work permits; their number was around 50000 until the end of the 1980's.⁶ However, in the nineties, the number of illegal immigrants rose abruptly and their presence in Greece instigated various reactions, both on the political and the social level. "Why did Greece become a destination country for immigrants?" is a question that has puzzled citizens and politicians, due to the multifaceted consequences of the phenomenon.

Reasons for immigrating to Greece

The most prominent theory explaining migration has been the one of "push"-supply side factors influencing the eagerness to emigrate- and "pull"- demand side factors that affect the demand for immigrants in the destination country. In Europe, dramatic political changes utterly transformed the migration flows. The collapse of the USSR and its fragmentation was followed by the subsequent collapse of all the socialist countries in and around Balkans. The Iron Curtain fell and the reunification of Germany was the milestone of a new era to come with unpredictable consequences for all communist countries, whose demised economies led to the disintegration of the pre existing regimes for the adoption of more liberal policies economically and socially. The situation worsened with the disintegration of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia, the bloody civil wars of 1992-1995 and the bombarding of Kosovo in 1998, leading thus to the displacement of millions of people, in search of a better future. This constitutes one of the basic push factors responsible for changing the immigration patterns in South Europe and in Greece in particular, since the largest group of immigrants residing in Greece comes from ex communist countries.

⁵ www.refugee.org

⁶ Fakiolas, R., "Migration and Unregistered Labour in the Greek Economy", in R. King, G. Lazaridis and C. Tsardanidis (eds.), Eldorado or Fortress? Migration in Southern Europe (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), p. 59

Demography also played an important role for the rise in the number of immigrants in all the South European countries. In 1985, half of the population of Non-European Mediterranean countries like Algeria, Libya, Syria, Jordan Iraq were between the ages of 0 and 15 years old, where almost 15 per cent of the population of France, Greece, Italy and Spain were more than 65 years old.⁷ Consequently, it would be impossible for the inhabitants of the above-mentioned countries to find work in their homelands. Furthermore, Third world economies are based on traditional production methods in agriculture, fishing or animal husbandry without the use of technological advances which optimize production. The lack of industries is an element that accentuates unemployment in African and Asian countries and it is expected that they will emigrate to countries whose economies have labour niches where masses of people can be fitted. Moreover, the Southern European countries managed to modernize their economies, rendering themselves ideal places for emigration.⁸ The high fertility rates of the Non-EU Mediterranean countries, when combined with political upheaval, unemployment and harsh living conditions can explain the eagerness of the inhabitants to move to South European Mediterranean countries, like Greece.⁹

In addition, the differences between the South and the North of Europe concerning wages and living standards have narrowed significantly after the 1970's, rendering thus the South European Mediterranean countries desirable destinations for emigration. The income discrepancies between the host and the source countries are one of the basic pull factors. To illustrate our case, Albanian wages are approximately \$3 per day, while in Greece, the wages of an Albanian illegal worker fluctuate between \$6 and \$10 dollars in rural areas and between \$15 and \$20 in the Athens metropolitan area.¹⁰

⁷ Fakiolas, "Migration", p.76

⁸ Iosifides, T. and R. King, "Recent Immigration to Southern Europe: the Socio-economic and Labour Market Contexts", Journal of Area Studies, *Southern Europe in transition*, Issue 9 (Autumn 1996), p.75

⁹ King, R., A. Fielding, and R. Black, "The International Migration Turnaround in Southern Europe", in R. King and R. Black (eds.), Southern Europe and the New Migrations (Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 1997) p.8

¹⁰ Migration News 1997, cited in Droukas, E. "Albanians in the Greek Informal Economy", Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Vol.24, No 2 (1998), p. 359

Geographically, Greece is in the South of Europe; with its numerous islands and a coastal line of 15,000 kilometres it is difficult to guard all possible entries. Greek immigration policies have been traditionally lenient compared with the ones in the Northern Europe and immigration policy was almost non-existent until the mid 1990s, because tourism is a very profitable sector of the Greek economy and the control borders were never harsh.¹¹ Also, the northern part of the country borders with Albania, FYROM, Bulgaria and Turkey. This facilitates access to the country through the main land, minimizing the cost of transport.

The most important pull factor is the nature of the economies in the Southern European countries. Greece in particular has a large informal economy that accounts up to 30-35 per cent of the GDP¹² Small-scale family businesses are still very prominent in Greece. In order for them to be sustainable and competitive, they need to use cheap labor hands, unskilled or semi-skilled. In other countries, part time or seasonal employment of the young population (e.g. students) meets these needs. However, most families prefer sustaining their children till they find a high status job - preferably in the public sector- to letting them perform an unskilled one. A large number of young Greeks consider working in menial jobs degrading, therefore “labor shortages are largely met by immigrants who are willing to be geographically *mobile* and to be *flexible* with regard to working practices and wages”.¹³ Apart from the traditional push and pull factors explaining the boom, the existence of a certain economic and social parameters mentioned before render the demand for cheap labor imperative: the immigrants fill in an important gap in the labour market of the black economy. Furthermore, immigrants are used in the highly profitable and expanding market of service sector. The services include domestic hotel work, catering, entertainment and a booming sex industry.¹⁴

¹¹ Iosifides, T. and R. King, “Recent Immigration to Southern Europe: the Socio-economic and Labour Market Contexts”, Journal of Area Studies, *Southern Europe in transition*, Issue 9 (Autumn 1996), p.75

¹² Baldwin- Edwards, M. and C. Safiliou- Rothschild, “Immigration and Unemployment in Greece: Perceptions and Realities”, South European society and Politics, Vol. 4, No. 4, Special Issue on Unemployment in Southern Europe, “Coping with the Consequences”, ed. Nancy G. Bermeo, (Winter 1999), p.207

¹³ Fakiolas, “Migration and Unregistered Labour”, p. 61

¹⁴ see Fakiolas, “Migration and Unregistered”,

Unfortunately, the push and pull theories do not account for all the migration patterns observed. Around the 1970's Marxist political ideologies tried to explain the phenomenon of migration by classifying the migrants all over the world belong in the same social class, the "helot" of the working force. Yet, this theory, seeking to explain the political economy of migration based on capital logic, failed to account for the human factor and the individual choices, since the individual was acting as part of the global working class.¹⁵ Giddens's structuration theory allowed for a different interpretation of migration moves, by acknowledging the existence of structures which are simultaneously enabling and repressing, and can be manipulated both by the individual and collective participants- e.g. the state- or supranational organizations, like the EU, the OECD and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs).¹⁶

Consequently, there are other parameters that influence migration, like migrant networks both in the source and the host country, which control the flow of immigrants and condition their choice of destination. These networks include clandestine agents both in the source and the destination country, who transport the prospective illegal immigrants and function as intermediaries with prospective employers for work in the informal economy once they have reached their destination. A peripheral role is played by family members, relatives or friends, who already reside or have recently been to the country of destination and persuade them to choose the country, the city or the rural area most suited and sometimes the nature of work. Today's migration is not organized by the state to satisfy Fordist types of labour market needs. On the contrary, it satisfies shortages in the informal sector, that is why these informal networks are vital for the livelihood and well being of the migrants at the first steps of immigration, since it provides them with security, protection and even justice. The drawback of these networks is that sometimes they are capable of preserving immigration

¹⁵ Phizacklea, A., "Migration and Globalisation- A Feminist Perspective", in K. Koser and H. Lutz (eds.) The New Migration in Europe- Social Constructions and Social Realities, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), p.26

¹⁶ Phizacklea, "Migration", p. 26

flows even if there is actually no need in the formal or the informal sector of the host countries.¹⁷ Furthermore, some of these networks have direct links to mafia organizations and encourage migrants' participation in criminal activities. These clusters of migrant networks are highly active in Greece, especially in the Athens metropolitan area.

Immigrants: how many are they and where do they come from?

In order to sufficiently understand the most key parameters of immigration in Greece, it is imperative that we have some idea of their number, nationalities and occupations. Some scholars refer to this new flow of migration in South Europe as new "migration".¹⁸ The term 'new' includes both new immigrant-sending countries (like the former socialist countries) and new destinations, e.g. Europe and especially the Southern part of the European Union. The "new" Greek migration is definitely a justified characterization, because of its peculiarities. Immigrants are mostly employed in the informal or tertiary economy, (before they were mostly employed in large-scale industries). Their social position is at the end of the social scale with little opportunities of amelioration, they are not organized in trade unions, most of them are illegal and clandestine and lastly, the new migration is feminized with serious changes in the patterns of gender migration.¹⁹ Their status depends on several factors. If they are political immigrants and refugees, they are granted a temporary residence permit in Greece. Also, there are some immigrants that come to Greece with temporary work or tourist visas. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of the immigrants that reside in Greece are clandestine. Today, data on illegal immigration in Greece vary according to the source. There have been no serious attempts to accurately determine their numbers and the best available data are specula-

¹⁷ Hamilton, N. and Chinchilla, N.S. "Global Economic Restructuring and International Migration: Some Observations Based on the Mexican and Central American Experience", *International Migration*, Vol. 34, (1997) p. 197, cited in Fakiolas, "Migration and Unregistered Labour", p. 64

¹⁸ Koser, K. and H. Lutz, "The New Migration in Europe: Contexts, Constructions and Realities in K. Koser and H. Lutz (eds.), *The New Migration in Europe- Social Constructions and Social Realities*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), p.2

¹⁹ Iosifides, T. and R. King, "Recent Immigration to Southern Europe: the Socio-economic and Labour Market Contexts", *Journal of Area Studies*, *Southern Europe in Transition*, Issue 9, Autumn 1996, p.75

tions. In 1999, government estimates suggest the number 500.000-600.000, which represents a 12 per cent of the labor force²⁰, whereas other estimates point to the number of 800,000.²¹

In the beginning of the 1980's, Greece accepted the settlement of around 200,000 thousand Greek citizens and ethnic Greeks from Egypt, Zaire, Cyprus, Turkey, who were considered to be political refugees.²² 50,000 of them were Pontians - ethnic Greeks from Asia Minor that settled in USSR after 1922 – which continue emigrating in Greece at an annual rate of around 10,000, due to economic and social difficulties.²³

Albanians are the most prominent group of illegal immigrants in Greece nowadays, estimated around 150.000 by Petrinioti²⁴ and as much as 500,000 by the Greek ministry of Foreign Affairs²⁵. During the last regularization effort, approximately 350,000 immigrants applied for white card and 230,000 of them were Albanians²⁶. The first wave that crossed the country were mainly political immigrants, when the Greek state opened the Greek- Albanian borders to help the reunification of the Greek minority members living in Albania with their relatives in Greece in 1987. Many of these ethnic Greeks settled in Greece in the beginning of the 90's and obtained Greek nationality. Afterwards, the majority of Albanians who came were ethnic Albanians and was characterized as economic migrants. Albania faced severe economic crisis after the collapse of the isolationist regime of Hodja, with unemployment reaching the unprecedented level of 60 per cent.²⁷ Since Greece offers a lot of opportunities in the parallel economy, a lot of Albanians constantly cross the borders either by foot through the mountains, or by sea through the Ionian Sea. Most of them are immediately deported to Albania only to return to Greece as soon as they are taken to the borders. In 1993 only,

²⁰ Baldwin- Edwards, M. and R. Fakiolas, "Greece: The Contours of a Fragmented Policy Response", in M. Baldwin Edwards, J. Arango (eds.), Immigrants and the Informal Economy in Southern Europe (London and Portland: Cass 1999), p. 188

²¹ Number mentioned in Survey conducted by the Statistical Institute of Greece, Eleftherotypia, 3/8/2001

²² Fakiolas and King, "Emigration", p.177

²³ ibidem, p.177

²⁴ Petrinioti X., Immigration into Greece, Athens: Odysseas(in Greek) cited in Lazaridis, G. and K. Romaniszyn "Albanian and Polish Undocumented Workers in Greece: A Comparative Analysis", Journal of European Social Policy, Vol.8 (1)1998, p.12

²⁵ www.mfa.gr

²⁶ Data from the Greek Employment observatory cited in Lianos, P. T. "Illegal Migrants to Greece and Their Choice of Destination", International Migration Quarterly Review, Vol. 39, No. 2, (2001), p.18

²⁷ Lazaridis, G. and K. Romaniszyn, "Albanian and Polish Undocumented Workers in Greece: A Comparative Analysis", Journal of European Social Policy, Vol.8, No.1, (1998), p.11

220,655 Albanian citizens were apprehended and “returned back to Albania”, according to the Ministry of Public order.²⁸

Bulgarians are another important –mainly illegal- migrant group. Emigration is a new phenomenon in their country, which began after the liberalization of passport controls and visa requirements for Bulgarian citizens. Migration to Greece started in 1990 and was characterized by seasonality, in contrast with the Albanian, which was quasi- permanent. This is due to bilateral agreements signed by the Greek and Bulgarian states for the issuance of seasonal working visas to Bulgarian workers, which, according to the Greek employment observatory, are 23,043.²⁹ Nevertheless, this number represents the Bulgarians that applied for Green cards during the first regularization of illegal immigrants in Greece and it is difficult to estimate their exact number, because they usually overstay their works visas and then disappear in the abyss of the black market. Most of them are women, reaching a percentage of 60-65 percent, highlighting thus the importance of the service sector in Greece, a primarily feminine sector.³⁰ The need for housekeepers and babysitters is high and Bulgarian women are considered to be trustworthy, in contrast with the Albanian ones (by far the biggest immigrant group in Greece), since there is allegations of baby smuggling conducted by the infamous Albanian Mafia.³¹ Bulgarian men are mainly employed in construction or fruit picking in the north of Greece.³²

Polish workers constitute the third largest group of undocumented immigrants in Athens. Romaniszyn mentions that Polish political immigrants who left Poland after the imposition of martial law in

²⁸ Press Release by the Ministry of Public Order on July 21, 1994 cited in Droukas, E., “Albanians in the Greek Informal Economy”, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Vol.24, No 2 (1998), p. 352

²⁹ Lianos, “Illegal Migrants”, p.19

³⁰ Percentage deducted form the data presented by Lianos, “Illegal Migrants”, p.18

³¹ Droukas, “Albanians”, p.310

³² Marcova, E. and A. Sarris: “ The Performance of Bulgarian Illegal immigrants in the Greek Labour Market”, South European Society and Politics, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Autumn 1997), p.65

1981 preceded the economical ones that emigrated in Greece at the beginning of the 1990's.³³ These immigrants had to issue a tourist visa in order to evade Poland and they were given a residence permit in Greece, as political refugees, in the route towards a more prosperous country, like USA, Canada or Australia.³⁴ After 1987 though, Polish workers could only come to Greece issuing three-month tourist visas and then overstay these visas, becoming therefore illegal. They mostly find work in construction or harvesting – men- and the service sector- for women. Their number is –as in the other immigrants that we saw- difficult to estimate. Others argue that their number is around 30,000 or even 100,000.³⁵

Apart from these large groups, there is a number of other illegal immigrants that either come from previous communist states (Romania Ukraine, Georgia Moldova) or from third world and Asian countries (Pakistan, India, Egypt, Syria). Until now, the relevant literature has produced some important work on the Albanian immigrants that constitute the largest group, as well as Poles, the Bulgarian immigrants, the Egyptian and the Filipinos. In an effort to draw some conclusions about the nature of the jobs have, we could argue that the division is more spatial and less generic or depending on nationality. In rural settings male immigrants are occupied in agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and construction, whereas women are employed as housekeepers and cleaners. In metropolitan and urban areas, males find employment mainly in the construction and in small-scale businesses while women work as cleaners in public buildings, housekeepers and as “entertainers” in the dubious sex-entertainment sector.

Having drawn the human geography of immigration in Greece, it is important that we try to understand the consequences of immigration in various levels of human activities and specifically to examine the truth of various allegations concerning the negative impact of immigration.

³³ Romaniszyn, K. “The Invisible Community: Undocumented Polish Workers in Athens”, *New Community*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (April 1996), p. 321-322

³⁴ *ibidem*, p.323

³⁵ *Kathimerini*, daily newspaper and the catholic church assigned to Poles cited in Romaniszyn, “ The Invisible Community”, p. 324-325

The economic consequences of immigration

No doubt that the major question that arises given the extent of immigration in Greece is the potential of the Greek labor market to absorb the influx of these immigrants. A positive answer presupposes the existence of certain economic features which are abundant in the Greek economy. Firstly, it is characterized by high seasonality in its most developed sectors, like tourism, agriculture and construction.

This is because a large part of the Greek economy depends on small-scale family businesses that require unskilled or semiskilled workers and their competitiveness is based on labor intensity and low wages, like the ones given to illegal immigrants. Low wages are very difficult to attain for legal indigenous workers because the social contribution of the formal economy is around 30 per cent of the GDP, the highest of all the countries in the European Union.³⁶ In such cases, the informal sector always blossoms and this constitutes the second important feature of the Greek economy. According to Eurostat, the informal economy represents 45 per cent of the GDP, whereas in Spain and Portugal it only generates 15 per cent of the GDP.³⁷

Thirdly, Greece has a very high rate of unemployment, over 10 per cent, inflicting mainly women and young people.³⁸ Consequently, the existence seems paradoxical that there are labor openings or shortages sufficient to absorb the illegal immigrants. Yet, the coexistence of labor shortages and unemployment is not an oxymoron, because young people in Greece are very unwilling to take up jobs that have low prestige and are underpaid, preferring to be supported by their families.³⁹

Nevertheless, in various polls most of the Greeks claimed that immigrants competed with domestic workers, while some Greek Scholars are also supportive this view.⁴⁰ Available data disprove it, and show

³⁶ Fakiolas and King, "Emigration, Return, Immigration", p. 182

³⁷ Fakiolas, R. and R. King "Emigration, Return, Immigration: A Review and Evaluation of Greece's Post-War Experience of International Migration", *International Journal of Population Geography*, Vol. 2 (1996), p.76 (footnote)

³⁸ Baldwin- Edwards and Safilios- Rothschild, "Immigration and Unemployment" p. 207

³⁹ Fakiolas, "Migration", p. 183-184

⁴⁰ Baldwin Edwards and Safilios Rothschild: "Immigration and Unemployment", p.215-216.
For scholars supporting this view, see Lianos in "Illegal Migrants", p.15

that there are actually shortages in the Greek informal economy filled with immigrants.⁴¹ Trade Unions have openly supported the legalization of illegal immigrants, proving that they realize the positive effects of the existence of cheap labor force for the Greek economy. Along with the Ministry of Agriculture, they argue that immigrants have saved agriculture from disaster, and have reinforced the competitiveness of Greek products in the European Market by satisfying needs in harvesting, poultry and animal husbandry, while their participation in the labor dynamic of the country has steadied the wages.⁴² The positive consequences are apparent in the comments of the Association of the Greek Fish Farmers, who mostly employ illegal Albanians, while the flower Producers in Trizina would not be able to sustain their businesses without the contribution of cheap labor force from India.⁴³ In crude figures, migrants' work gave a boost to the Greek GDP of 0,4 percent in agriculture, reaching the 1 per cent in construction.⁴⁴ These percentages may seem contrived, but they were critical for keeping inflation down and helping the government implement their anti-inflationary policies in order to meet the convergence criteria for participation in the European Monetary Union, which Greece entered in June 2000, with the contribution of immigrant labour.

The service sector, with sub-sectors like housing, domestic work, entertainment and catering, even the sex industry, has largely expanded in the past decades due to various reasons. Women have started participating actively in the work force while the traditional model of the patriarchal family is still maintained.⁴⁵ Therefore, despite the fact that Greek women are active members of the work force, they still carry the burden of taking care of the elderly and children, performing also a considerable amount of housework. Since the social welfare in Greece is rudimentary, and they are expected to work while taking care of those in need, Greek women opt for paid migrant domestic work. It is a paradox that in order for the Greek women to emancipate themselves, other women have to be employed in socially degraded and stigmatized domestic

⁴¹ *ibidem*, p.211 and 215-216

⁴² *ibidem*, p.216-217

⁴³ *ibidem*, p.217

⁴⁴ *ibidem*, 211

⁴⁵ Lazaridis, G., "Filipino and Albanian Women Migrant Workers in Greece: Multiple Layers of Oppression" in F. Anthias and G. Lazaridis (eds.), *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe- Women on the Move* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000) pp.56-58

work. Consequently, both the individuals- Greek households are largely depended on paid housework-and the state – unable to provide adequate services like child care- are benefited from the work of thousands of legal and illegal female migrants.⁴⁶

Furthermore, we should bear in mind that most of the immigrants, due to their clandestine status, do not make use of any social benefits, even though schooling for their children and free medical insurance are to be provided, according to Greek and European law. They mainly consume local goods and especially food and clothing, thus stimulating the Greek commerce. The only drawback as far as economics are concerned is the remittances earned in Greece but sent or invested in the home country. Fakiolas and King admit that the drain is important (Albanians alone remit 400\$ million every year), but these remittances are significantly lower than the ones from Greeks who live outside the country.⁴⁷ Stark establishes a direct connection between the possibility of returning and overworking in the host country, according to which the immigrants most likely to return send more money than the ones likely to stay⁴⁸. In the Greek case, one of the recent polls concerning immigrants, 52,8 % of the questioned declared that they want to stay in Greece more than 10 years with the prospect of permanent settlement.⁴⁹ Consequently, the loss from the remittances is low, and that undermines the importance of the argument that immigrants are responsible for money drain, while they largely benefit from the Greek labor market.

In addition, there are fears that illegal immigration and therefore the abundance of cheap labour force may hinder the modernization of the Greek economy. Lianos points out:

“...The abundance of cheap labour reduces the incentives to substitute capital for labour and thus introduce improved technical methods in the production process.”⁵⁰

The Greek economy needs to be more flexible, with less state subsidies and its indigenous population must be prepared to be more mobile. Theoretically speaking, the demand for seasonal and part time labor could

⁴⁶ ibidem, p.58

⁴⁷ Fakiolas and King, “ Emigration, Return, Immigration” p.184

⁴⁸ Stark, The Migration of Labour, (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1991) cited in Marcova and Sarris “ The Performance”, p.60

⁴⁹ Eleftherotypia 1/8/ 2001

be fulfilled with Greek students and pensioners as elsewhere. Since there is a substantial part of the population – the immigrants- willing to undertake these jobs, it will be more difficult to alter the structure of the economic activities, or control the underground economy. ⁵¹ This is indeed a potential drawback of immigration in Greece, whose implications are yet to come.

What do the immigrants gain from migration to Greece?

In the previous chapter, we presented the impact of immigrant labor in the Greek economy, but did not refer to the benefits obtained by the immigrants themselves. As mentioned before, wages in Greece for work in the black market are 3 to 6 times higher than standard wages in their home countries. Yet, they have to live their lives in the insecurity and the constant fear of being deported. Since Greece has declared that Greece is not an immigration country, there is hardly any state infrastructure to help immigrants integrate in the Greek society. In the recent regularization procedure, 200,000 out of the 351,000 immigrants that applied for Green cards do not have social insurance. ⁵² That means that in a case of a work accident or any kind of illness, they have to rely on the humane feelings of the state hospitals which treat most of these cases free of charge. Additionally, the lack of working permit and social insurance denies them the right to a proper pension. They belong in what has been termed as “ the underclass”, which is the last class of the social stratum, since they work in undesirable, menial jobs and they are socially excluded.⁵³ They find themselves in an alien country, with difficulties in the language and the customs, even religion. In some cases, like the Polish immigrants, we detect the creation of social niches where people of the same nationality inform themselves about the homeland, socialize and create a microcosm on the periphery of the Greek society. Nevertheless, this is not always the case, since for Albanians and other nationalities there are no such clusters.

⁵⁰ Lianos, “Illegal Immigrants”, p.15

⁵¹ Fakiolas, “Migration ”, p.71

⁵² Eleftherotypia, 8-8-2001

⁵³ Lazaridis and Romanuszyn, “Albanian and Polish Workers”, p.9.

Research in the Metropolitan area of Athens has shown that immigrants occupy the poorest districts, where drug trafficking, prostitution, low quality accommodation and infrastructure is a common place.⁵⁴ These areas are not exactly ghettos, because they are not homogeneous and they are also occupied by the indigenous population.⁵⁵ Their residence is characterized by instability, because the stereotypical criminal immigrant influences Greek owners and they are very reluctant in renting their properties to Non Europeans.⁵⁶ In the cases where houses are actually rented, owners impose outrageous demands like three months rent in advance, no contract and unannounced “visits” which equals to inspection.⁵⁷ The lucky ones rent houses or apartments in run down areas or middle- class districts, while Albanians for example tend to reside in inner city hotels because they have been stereotyped as cunning, primitive and untrustworthy.⁵⁸ The majority of the immigrants tend to live with friends and relatives of the same nationality. In this way, they share the expenses – they change jobs frequently and may be unemployed until they find the next job. Additionally, they create for themselves a protected environment of solidarity and friendship, a social network that assists them in the search for employment, in case of emergency and constitutes the milieu where all the socializing is done. Social networks with roommates and flat-mates are primal for immigrants like Albanians, who do not have any kind of formal community formed in the big city center of Athens like other immigrant groups, e.g. Filipinos, Poles.⁵⁹ The main reason is their persecution by the Greek police.

The lack of tolerance for different social backgrounds has led to indications of xenophobia, highly cultivated by the mass media for reasons of publicity. Catchy titles like “Tuberculosis is here”(*Apo-gevmatini* , 27/9/ 1994), “Invasion of Illegal immigrants both from Land and Sea”(*Exusia* 27/1/1997) do not exactly promote the understanding of multiculturalism.⁶⁰ The Greek police have attributed the rise in crime

⁵⁴ Iosifides, T. and R. King, “Socio-Spatial Dynamics and Exclusion of Three Immigrant groups in the Athens Conurbation”, in M. Baldwin - Edwards and J. Arango (eds.), *Immigrants and the Informal Economy in Southern Europe* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), p.208 - 209

⁵⁵ Iosifides and king, socio-spatial, p.215

⁵⁶ Most advertisements concerning property renting finish with the phrase “ohi allodapi”, meaning no foreigners.

⁵⁷ Iosifides and king, socio spatial, p.221

⁵⁸ Lazaridis, G. “Immigration to Greece: a Critical Evaluation of Greek Policy”, *New Community*, (1996), p. 344

⁵⁹ Iosifides and King, “Socio-spatial”, p.214

⁶⁰ Tittles mentioned in Droukas, “Albanians ”, p.357

to the existence of illegal immigrants and especially to the Albanians. It is true that in 1997, 39 per cent of the population of Greek prisons were prisoners, the highest percentage in Europe.⁶¹ But it is also true that a great percentage was held for immigration - related offences, before their deportation from the country, or while waiting for the appeal procedure.⁶² In a report from the Human Rights Watch presented in November 2000, it was shown that many prisoners were jailed before trial because they were not Greek, others for breaking the Aliens Law, e.g. for simply being on Greek soil, and lastly, 85 percent of the convicted prisoners were detained beyond their sentences because they could not be deported.⁶³ It has also been proved that due to the immigrant's limited knowledge of the Greek language, they are poorly represented in court - the attorney is only assigned the day of the trial- and judges tend to give harsher sentences to foreigners than Greeks for similar or identical crimes.⁶⁴

Greek society and immigrants: A thorny relationship

What is the reaction of the Greek society? Before reviewing their reaction, we ought to explain the idea of *Greekness* and the construction of Greek identity. It is generally believed that Greece has always been an ethnically homogeneous society, an argument that is widely used by scholars and people in general, in an attempt to explain and justify Greek xenophobia and evidences of racism. The truth however is altogether different. In the Greek territories, the coexistence of other ethnicities – Turkish, Albanian, Bulgarian and Romanian - was a common phenomenon.⁶⁵ After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire there was a need of defining the Greek identity and its premium characteristics. It was then that the Orthodox Religion, along with the Greek language- expressing the continuity with ancient Greece- were chosen to be the pillars

⁶¹ Baldwin- Edwards, M., “Crime and Migrants: Some Myths and Realities”, Presentation [in Greek] to the International Police Association, 17th Greek Section Conference, Samos, 4 May, 2001, p.2

⁶² Baldwin- Edwards, M. “Crime and Migrants”, p.3

⁶³ HRW [Human Rights Watch] (2001): ‘Re: Third Periodic Report of Greece’, public letter addressed to UN committees Against Torture, April 23, 2001 cited in Baldwin –Edwards, “Crime and Migrants”, p. 5

⁶⁴ Papantoniou , A et al. (1998) : ‘Illegal Migration in Greece and the Problem of Crime’, Report in Framework of TSER Project, mimeo , 357 pp +biblio., Athens November 1998, cited in Baldwin -Edwards, “Crime and Migrants” , p.6

⁶⁵ Kitromilides, P. “ ‘Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans”, in Blinkhorn, M. and Veremis, T., (eds.) Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality (Athens: Sage/ELIAMEP, 1990), p.42-43

of the New Greek identity. The main goal for the small Greek State was an irredentist policy of annexing all the Greek speaking territories. By ‘inventing’ thus the Greek Identity, the problematic of belonging and social exclusion for Non –Greeks was inevitable. One would expect that the population of a state with such a long tradition in emigration would be tolerant and understanding towards the political and the economic migrants seeking a better future in our country. Greeks were famous all over the world for their hospitality and friendliness towards the “foreigner”, a sacred figure from Ancient Greek times. Unfortunately, after a first period in which they showed willingness to help the immigrants, they developed xenophobic feelings and attitudes.

The Media have sensationalized certain incidents, like the hijacking of two buses by Greek Albanian resulting in the death of a Greek passenger (1999), in order to accentuate the profile of the “criminal” illegal immigrant.⁶⁶ This stereotype was also reinforced in 1997 when an economic and political crisis broke out in Albania. Many prisoners were released and a lot of them are alleged to have moved in Greece. Most polls that have been conducted present unanimously contradictory results, but generally, Greeks are beginning to get used to the presence of foreigners in Greece. Baldwin –Edwards mentions that in three polls conducted in the Northern Greece around 85 per cent of the people questioned thought that immigrants constitute a “public danger” and they are responsible for the rise in criminality percentages in Greece.⁶⁷ In a recent survey of the Ministry of Interior, Greeks seem to be more moderate, since only 44,1% considers the presence of illegal immigrants in Greece as a negative fact.⁶⁸ In the same survey, people with higher education level than the average who lived in the same neighborhood and thus had the chance to socialize or meet immigrants, they tended to think more positively about them.⁶⁹

From the above data, it is obvious that opinions are changing progressively, and little by little Greeks are getting used to the idea of permanently settled Non-European foreigners. There are of course incidents

⁶⁶ Western Policy Regional Report, Volume 4, Issue 5, (August 1999 - September 1999)

⁶⁷ Baldwin –Edwards and Safilios- Rothschild, “Immigration”, p.214-215

⁶⁸ *Eleftherotypia*, 1/8/2001

⁶⁹ *Eleftherotypia*, 1/8/2001

of xenophobia and racism, like a recent incident in a small community in the island of Chios. The inhabitants-via a declaration of the local committee- demanded the immediate departure of all the legal Albanian residents and their families, as retaliation for the injuries of some Greek villagers from a group of Albanians during a fight in a local bar. The unprecedented incident dichotomized the Greek public opinion, especially after the expulsion of the Albanians, since according to the Greek Constitution, such an act undermined the Albanians' rights of freedom in spatial mobility, rights that ought to be protected by the state.⁷⁰ Although condemned by the governmental spokesman, the expulsion of the Albanians was not prevented, an attitude that equals to tacit consent.

It has been noted that the hostility against immigrants is much higher for the non-Christian orthodox and generally non-Christians. For this reason it is better to be Russian, Ukraine or Georgian, than to be Albanian, Pakistani or Indian. The Greek Church has repeatedly warned its "flock" for the danger of the national traditions being destroyed by immigrants, and even publicly opposed to the carriage of the Greek flag from a 15-year-old Albanian boy at a local national day parade, although he was the best student in school on the grounds of his nationality.⁷¹ Luckily, the Greek government condemned the Church's position and the boy was allowed to march holding the Greek flag.

Apart from similar isolated incidents, there has been no serious efforts to endanger the lives of immigrants, and there are no parties in the Parliament that hold an anti-immigrant stance, a phenomenon that has been observed in Italy, Germany, Austria and France.

Trafficking and prostitution

As we have already mentioned, today's migration in Western Europe has certain characteristics that utterly differentiate it from previous migrations during the 20th century. The illegal status and the growing number of female numbers are two of them, both of which are found in the Greek case. Illegality and clan-

⁷⁰ Read relative articles in Eleftherotypia, 3-4-5/8-2001

⁷¹ See "Southern Europe Smuggling", Migration News Volume 7, Number 12, December 2000, Electronic Version

destine status often lead to trafficking of immigrants who pay up to \$4000 each to be transported into wagons or lorry trucks, ships or small boats, endangering their own lives with the hope for a better future. In an effort to seal her borders, Europe has caused the death of around 6,000 prospective immigrants, who died in an effort to approach European soil.⁷² Most of them have died trying to reach Greece, Italy and Spain, the border countries in the South of the Continent. The Adriatic, the Ionian and the Aegean Sea is full of wrecked ships and bodies, while there are various reports, denouncing the death and mutilation of many Asians trying to cross the mine fields in the Northern border of Greece with Turkey and Bulgaria.⁷³

Whereas the number of illegal immigrants in Greece is around 600,000, half of them are women⁷⁴. Female migrants, like the Russians, the Ukrainians, and the Filipinos, exclusively represent some nationalities. Other nationalities include Albanians, Bulgarians, Romanians and Poles. Given the above data, female trafficking is an important parameter of immigration in Greece that needs to be presented in order to allow for a broader understanding of the social and economic implications of the phenomenon. The feminization of the Greek migration is fairly new, since until now migrant women followed men in the destination country. This pattern has undergone great changes, with women initiating migration for political and economic reasons. Greece has emerged as a major destination and transit country in female trafficking because of its strategic geographical position. Female trafficking merges the idea of feminized illegal migration with the sex/entertainment and in a lesser extent the maid industry worldwide. The International organization of Migration describes trafficking as “any illicit transporting of migrant women and/or trade in the for economic or personal gain.”⁷⁵ To grasp the extent of the phenomenon in Europe, it is sufficient to say that 4 million women are displaced from their countries in order to participate in the booming sex industry, and 70 to 80 per cent of these women are from Eastern Europe. In addition, a great percentage of these women are underage.

⁷² see Eleftherotypia, 9/8/2001

⁷³ Eleftherotypia, 5/8/2001

⁷⁴ Lazaridis, “Trafficking”, p.75

⁷⁵ IOM (1995) cited in Lazaridis, G., “Trafficking and Prostitution in Greece- The Growing Exploitation of Migrant Women in Greece”, The European Journal of Women’s Studies, Vol. 8, No. 1, (2001) p.72

In Greece there are no statistical data concerning female trafficking, since these women are also illegal immigrants and the only data available relate to their deportation from Greek authorities. Only 23 per cent of these women know beforehand that they are going to be engaged in the sex industry.⁷⁶ The rest of them are recruited as entertainers or strippers from members of international Mafia gangs which operate both in the origin and the destination country, promising these women a better future and a well paid job. When they arrive, the procurers strip them of all their legal documents, and thus the woman –if found by the police- is not protected but deported as an undesirable foreigner. Both Lazaridis⁷⁷ and Psimmenos⁷⁸ stress that the most important feature of the flexible female worker in the sex industry is ephemerality. The “cargo” changes every 10-15 days in order to avoid being traced. Ephemerality is directly linked with transferability of these women all over Greece or even in other countries. In case of deportation, these almost never reach their homeland, since the armed Mafia enters the train before the police and within 48 hours they come back to Greece, or sold to other traffickers in the Balkans.⁷⁹ In a survey conducted in Athens it was found that a great percentage of these girls had no idea in which district they were or even where Athens is, while almost 50 per cent of them had no sense of time⁸⁰.

The hierarchisation of the offered services, both in connection with the nationality of the women and their working place, constitutes another characteristic of trafficking and prostitution in Greece. Tall, blond, and slim Russians, Ukrainians, Poles are highly preferred by the clientele while Albanians or Filipinos are at the bottom of the sex preference rank. The first ones are more expensive, found in clubs and massage par-

⁷⁶ Lazos, G. “The Problem of Greece: A General Review of the Situation”, in *O Agonas tis Gynaekas*, Vol.63-64, (1996), p.19 (in Greek)

⁷⁷ Lazaridis, “Trafficking”, p.84-85)

⁷⁸ Psimmenos, I., “The Making of Periphrastic Spaces: The Case of Albanian Undocumented Female Migrants in the Sex Industry of Athens”, in F. Anthias and G. Lazaridis (eds.) *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe- Women on the Move* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), p.84-85

⁷⁹ Emke- Pouloupoulos, I., “Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit” ,(Athens: Institute for the Study of the Greek Economy and Greek Society of Demographic Studies, 2001), p.21

⁸⁰ Emke- Pouloupoulos, I., “trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit” ,(Athens: Institute for the Study of the Greek Economy and Greek Society of Demographic Studies, 2001) p.20

lors, some of them in hotels and legal or illegal parlors, whereas the Albanians and Asians prostitute themselves in the streets.

The obvious question concerns the measure and extent of official help to those women and children who fall prey to international crime gangs. Greece has no legislation to punish trafficking, which is wrongly equated with smuggling. Greek legislators and policymakers have chosen to undermine the importance of female trafficking in order to avoid taking measures to combat the problem. It is indicative that the UN Convention concerning the Aberration of Trade in Human Beings has not been ratified⁸¹ and although the Ministry of Public Order claims the creation of a special office to deal with trafficking, no such thing has ever existed.⁸² The Human Rights Watch denounces that very few cases go to court⁸³. Instead of using the victims as witnesses to destroy the trafficking gangs, they charge them with the offence of prostituting without proper license and/or they get deported for lack of proper documentation, despite the fact that it is well known that procurers strip off their victims of all their legal papers upon entry in Greece. There is no help line or a center to help with these women, who are criminalized by the state and they often commit suicide to escape their life, whereas Greek State officials have even been actively involved in the trafficking business. It was discovered that employees of the Greek consulate abroad have been issuing documents allowing procurers and traffickers to obtain the Greek nationality and work in Greece.⁸⁴ The police have been protecting trafficking networks for large amounts of money, a phenomenon so frequent that in 1998 led to the dismissal of the Minister of Public Order.⁸⁵ After a few days, the Athens police chief, his deputy and his superintendent were also found guilty of participating and offering protection to prostitution rackets and traffickers of illegal immigrants.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Lazaridis, "Trafficking", p.76

⁸² *Eleftherotypia*, interview with the writer of the 2001 Human Rights Watch report for Greece 5/8/2001

⁸³ *ibidem*.

⁸⁴ Pouloupoulos, "Trafficking", p.32

⁸⁵ Baldwin –Edwards, M. and R. Fakiolas, " Greece: The Contours of a Fragmented Policy Response", in M. Baldwin Edwards, J. Arango (eds.), *Immigrants and the Informal Economy in Southern Europe* (London and Portland: Cass 1999), p.197

⁸⁶ *ibidem* ,p.197

What about the response of the Greek society? Greek society has always tolerated prostitution as a male vice that must be satisfied. Until recently, there was a clear differentiation between women with whom men satisfy their sexual needs- prostitutes – and women for procreation and family- who ought to be “chaste” and “innocent”. Furthermore, most of the Greeks seem to think that these migrant women were also employed in the sex business in their country and they seem to underestimate the number of women that are sexually exploited. Curiously enough, serious researchers have expressed the same opinion, by claiming that “all those tragic cases of female and child immigration constitute but a very small percentage of female immigrants.”⁸⁷

The Greek immigration Policy

Until now, we have seen various aspects of migration in Greece, but we have not examined the official reaction of the Greek State. Unfortunately, unlike the other southern states of Italy and Spain, Greece – and in a lesser extent Portugal- has refused to open its eyes to reality, blatantly declaring, “ Greece is not a country of immigration”. This is overwhelmingly obvious, if we take a look at the regularization procedures among the other South European states: Italy has had 4, Spain 5 whereas Greece had only two, the last of which finished on the 2nd of August 2001, so we do not have any official results concerning its approval rates.⁸⁸

Before the 1990’s, Greece saw no reason to change her 1929 Alien Law, which determined the conditions under which foreigners were accepted on Greek soil. After the influx of political and economic migrants, especially from Albania, the Government understood the necessity of revising the existing law in order to adjust to the new situation. Consequently, a new Alien law was introduced in 1991 and it was accused immediately of being permeated with policing philosophy and xenophobia.⁸⁹ According to the 1991 law, a

⁸⁷ Fakiolas, R. and L. Maratou-Alipranti, “ Foreign Female Immigrants in Greece”, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Servei de Publicacions, Papers. 60, 2000 p. 111

⁸⁸ Numbers taken from Apap, J., P. De Bruycker and C. Schmitter, “Regularisation of Illegal Aliens in the European Union. Summary Report of a Comparative Study”, European Journal of Migration and Law Vol. 2 (2000), p.289, table 6

⁸⁹ Baldwin-Edwards and Fakiolas, “Greece: The contours”, p.188

special police force is set up to patrol the borders, with the obligation to check all foreigners entering Greece for travel documents, whilst foreigners could be expelled without a trial or a waiting period. Residence permits need pre entry authorization (very difficult to obtain), while work permits are employer specific and are valid for one year with the possibility of being renewed. Only holders of two-year residence permits have the right to family reunification. Administrative deportation, list of undesirable Aliens and public policy limitations are also mentioned in the 1991 law. The provisions for the refugees are similar with the ones in the rest of Europe, meaning rejection if the application is not filled in immediately upon entry, or the refugee has passed through a safe third country or the application is unfounded according to the opinion of the responsible committee.⁹⁰ Fines, imprisonment, and frequent expulsion are the bottom line of a Law who seem to consider immigration a historic accident. The Greek Government has extensively expelled Albanians exerting thus pressure on the Albanian government, in order to gain more rights for the ethnic Greek minority living in Albania.

The Greek Government, in tandem with the EU directives concerning immigration, decided in 1997 to operate the first regularization programme. Before presenting it, a review of the European Union immigration policies will help us understand the Greek choices and compare it with similar ones implemented elsewhere in Europe. Until recently, every country had its own immigration policies according to its own economic and social interests. When the European Economic cooperation changed into European Union in 1992, there was an increasing demand for standardization of the immigration policies around Europe and the population residing in Europe was instantly divided into the *communitari* (citizens of countries belonging in the EU) and the *extra communitari* (citizens of non EU countries).

The basic requirement for belonging in the first group is being national of any of the 15 member states of the EU. Therefore, European citizenship is strictly connected to nationality as far as its substance is concerned, thus excluding all the people who reside in the 15 members but are not nationals, e.g. mainly the asylum

⁹⁰ ibidem, p.190

seekers, legal and illegal immigrants. This definition of citizenship directly derives from national concepts of citizenship and explains the exclusion of extra communitarians from European citizenship. The European Union feared that once the internal borders are abolished, EU countries would flood with immigrants and asylum seekers trying to benefit by their strong economies and /or high social benefits. The only solution was the tightening of the controls in the external borders of the Union, even at the expense of the 1951 Geneva Convention concerning the Human rights of the Asylum Seekers.

In accordance with the above European directives and following the example of Italy and Spain, Greece preferred the choice of *one-off* regularization, which presupposes that the conditions of regularization are fulfilled on a given date (particularly the date of entry of those concerned of their presence within the territory of the State in question on a particular date). It is a case of *fait accompli* procedure, because the regularization aims to legalize the illegal immigrants who have been residing in the country for a certain period.⁹¹ Despite the hopes for thorough research and use of the immigration experiences of the Northern European countries, the two decrees announced in 1997 laid down two complicated stages of regularization, one for the acquisition of the white card (lasting only six months) and a second one for the green card (lasting from 1 to 5 years). The papers required from the immigrants were very difficult to be issued, whilst the police and the ministry of public Order were unable to deal with the problems occurred, mostly caused by the shortcomings of the law and the bureaucratic inefficiency of the state administration public clerks.⁹² A lot of the immigrants did not get sufficient information about the necessary documents whereas others could not complete the application due to limited knowledge of the Greek bureaucracy and language. Opportunistic attitudes on the part of Greek civil servants and the police were abundant, trying to “help” the immigrants in issuing certain documents at a certain price.⁹³ It is not a coincidence that the deadlines for applying for the Green card have been prolonged four times, the last date being April 1999. From the 369,629 people that

⁹¹ Apap, De Bruycker and Schmitter, “Regularisation”, p.268-269

⁹² Baldwin-Edwards and Fakiolas, Greece: The Contours”, p.192

⁹³ Lazaridis, G. and J. Poyago – Theotoky, “ Undocumented Migrants in Greece: Issues of Regularisation”, International Migration, Vol. 37, No. 4,(1999), p.729

applied for white cards and afterwards 225,000 for green cards, only 100,812 positive decisions were made until January 2000.⁹⁴

Considering the masses of illegal immigrants residing in Greece, this percentage hardly represents a solution to the problem. Naturalization is considered to be a more sufficient way of integrating economically and socially foreigners, but this procedure in Greece is based on *ius sanguinis* (nationality by descent) and not in *ius soli* (nationality by birthplace). The Greek naturalization policy has overtly favored ethnic Greeks since between 1985–1995, 75 per cent of the naturalizations were granted to ethnic Greeks.⁹⁵

Fortunately, the Greek state, seeing that the existing law hardly gave a solution to this acute social problem, prepared a second one-off regularization, starting on the 5th of June 2001 until the 2nd of August of the same year. The goal of this measure was to regularize as many illegal immigrants possible. Nevertheless, the procedure was once more complicated and the Greek authorities do not seem to have learned anything from the previous attempt to regularize immigrants. In brief, before obtaining a Green card, immigrants are granted a six-month residence card, an element existing in the previous legislation. Employment is employer-specific, occupation-specific and location-specific. In order to apply for the temporary white card, immigrants are asked to present within a limit of 3 months passport or similar document, proof of residence in Greece from June 2000 until the day of application, and a 50,000 drachmas (\$125) fee for the tax service. If an immigrant lacks any papers proving his residence in Greece, he is obliged to pay a certain amount of money to any of the social insurance institution in order to be eligible for a white card.

The family reunion legislation is among the ones who have raised a lot of controversy during the present regularization program. The only provision is for minor children (under 18) and not for dependent parents, a measure only implemented in Belgium out of 15 EU countries.⁹⁶ Access to health care and education is totally prohibited for illegal immigrants, whereas hospitals and health centers are obliged to report

⁹⁴ Apap, De Bruycker and Schmitter, “Regularisation”, p.277

⁹⁵ Lazaridis and Poyago – Theotoky, “Undocumented”, p. 731

⁹⁶ Table 2 in Baldwin-Edwards, M., “An Analytic Commentary on the Greek Immigration Bill, 2000”. Mediterranean Migration Observatory Working Paper Number 1, February 2001, (Athens: Panteion University, 2001)

them to the police. In July 2001, the Greek Committee for the Protection of Personal Data has denounced the illegality of this law, since it acts against the medical secrecy and the right to health treatment for all the people on Greek soil- irrespective of their nationality or status.⁹⁷ As far as education is concerned, the law mentions that all children must attend school, without legalizing the *contra legem* practice which was widespread until now, the non-requirement of documentation for the children of illegal immigrants.⁹⁸

Compared with similar procedures across Europe and especially the southern Mediterranean Countries, the inadequacies of this legalization are more than apparent. Experience from previous failures in Italy and Spain has shown that residence and work permits should be granted for longer periods. The application procedure is complicated enough to deter the immigrants from applying, drifting thus to illegality again. This has occurred in Spain and Italy, which is why in their most recent regularization programmes they made an effort to grant longer residence and work permits valid for any employers.⁹⁹ As far as family reunion is concerned, Italy, Portugal and Spain not only recognize the rights of children to unite with their parents, but also to dependent parents and other close relatives, a provision non-existent in the Greek law.¹⁰⁰ Measures against trafficking and prostitution are totally absent, despite the seriousness of the problem in Greece, a situation that has been outlined in the previous chapter of this paper. HealthCare and education parameters of the same law are not compatible with practices across Europe. It is sufficient to say that Italy has recognized the rights of undocumented migrants to health and education without any restrictions.¹⁰¹ Last but not least, the Greek costs for the legalization application on any stage are very high. For instance, the naturalization application fee is three times the level of the German one.¹⁰²

The deadline for the regularization finished on the 2nd of August and the undocumented migrants are requested to produce all the necessary documents until the 7th of September. The administration of the police and the municipalities responsible for the issuing of the documents have proved unable to deal with the

⁹⁷ Eleftherotypia, 29/7/2001 p.46

⁹⁸ Baldwin- Edwards, M., "An Analytic Commentary" p. 3

⁹⁹ *ibidem*, p.3-4

¹⁰⁰ *ibidem*, p.5

¹⁰¹ *ibidem*, p. 5-6

influx of migrants due to the lack of proper training and coordination in the various administrative offices across the country. ¹⁰³ According to the Greek press, corrupted civil servants have tried to profit by “facilitating” the issuing of various documents¹⁰⁴. The number of the applications has reached the 351.000, not even half of the actual size of the clandestine population in Greece¹⁰⁵, proving the overtly exclusionary character of the new legislation towards the undocumented migrants. Simultaneously, the Greek insurance and tax offices have gained between 20 and 25 billion drachmas (approximately \$55 –65 million) from the whole procedure, rendering the new law, apart from exclusionary, economically exploitative.¹⁰⁶ Considering the shortage of economic resources that characterizes the Greek Public Insurance Service in Greece, it seems that the regularization programme was designed for economic purposes only. The shortcomings of the new legislation, its ambiguity and sometimes its anti-constitutional parameters have failed to successfully address the issue of immigration in Greece. On the contrary, this new legalization has triumphally failed to legalize at least a large percentage of the undocumented immigrants. What will happen to the immigrants whose applications will be rejected? The French experience has shown that they will form a special group, that of the “officially illegal” immigrants which are to be deported. Yet, it has been proved that it is impossible to locate them and this type of “officially illegal” immigrants are lost in the underground economy and fall prey to the worst kind of exploitation in the black market.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

Immigration in Greece is an on-going procedure that suggests the tentative nature of any conclusions drawn at this moment. This paper has tried to address some of the most controversial issues as far as immigration and its implications are concerned, useful for further discussion. It is undeniable that immigrants

¹⁰² *ibidem*, p.6

¹⁰³ *Eleftherotypia*, 8/8/2001 and 29/8/2001

¹⁰⁴ *ibidem*, 8/8/2001 and 29/8/2001

¹⁰⁵ *Eleftherotypia*, 8/8/2001

¹⁰⁶ Number mentioned in *Eleftherotypia*, 8/8/2001

¹⁰⁷ Balibar, E. , M. Chemillier- Gendreau, J. Costa- Leroux and E. Terray, *Sans- Papiers : L’ archaisme fatal* (Paris : La Decouverte and Syros, 1999)

constitute a substantial number of the population residing in the country. They support the Greek economy and substitute for the lack of flexibility in the labor market. The 1990's have been a testing period for the Greek state, which proved to be unprepared -administratively and socially- to accept the masses of immigrants that flooded the country after 1990. The policies adopted seem to be influenced by northern European models, characterized by strict controls and regularizations. However, in Greece these models were applied without the same regard for the human rights of the immigrants, resulting in a modernization of immigration policies devoid of humane character. Unfortunately, the few data collected concerning the last regularization program do not refute the dehumanizing character of the Greek immigration policy, a fact that may provoke a backlash of immigrant anger. The European policies can only be implemented if the European Union is prepared to substitute economically for the immigrant labor, indispensable for the Greek economy.

The future is uncertain. Recent conflicts between Albanian extremists and the State Army in FYROM may result in massive inflows of political and economic immigrants in Greece. Nonetheless, it is certain that immigration is not a temporary phenomenon dependant upon exogenous factors, but a global reality, where populations in danger move to richer, more prosperous countries. The creation of immigrant "gulags" in prisons and in inner city areas only indicates the shortsightedness of the Greek legislators. The scope of any policy undertaken should transcend the limits of a formal legalization of the foreigners' status. As the Greek Ombudsman said, the aim of future policies should focus on "not the simple toleration of their presence in the country and their participation in the labour market, but the *social integration* at least of those who desire it and who have created legal and stable links with the Greek society".¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Report of the Ombudsman's Office, The Advocate of the Citizen "the Protection of Human Rights in Greece" December 2000

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