

# **Migration in Southern Europe and the Case of Greece**

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## **Abstract**

Over the last decades, the Southern European countries of Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece have all undergone transformation from senders to receivers of migrants. On the basis of this common feature, they have been grouped together in recent discussions of migration experiences and prospects. However, as revealed in comparisons made possible by the newly available data set from Greece's first regularisation programme, the migration experience of Greece departs radically from that of other southern European countries. To an extent unparalleled in Southern Europe, Greece has been subject to an immigration impact as the result of the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, some of which share borders with Greece. Characteristics of Greece's major source countries differ from those of other countries of Southern Europe 1) in that they are former communist countries that appear to have a long and difficult road of economic transition ahead, 2) with respect to proximity and 3) in terms of dominance of a single source country. These differences have important implications for future patterns of migration and of articulation of the labour markets of receiving countries with those of specific sending countries.

## **1. Introduction**

Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece were all traditional countries of emigration from the 19th century until relatively recently. Greece, Italy and Spain all acquired positive migratory balances in the early 1970's and Portugal did so shortly thereafter.

The common feature of transformation from sender to receiver in the migration experience of Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece has been widely noted in recent literature. In discussions of new trends of migration flows, these countries of Southern Europe are frequently grouped together. They have also been grouped together in recent discussions concerning policy. As has been noted, due to their common experience of relatively sudden transformation from senders to receivers of migrants, these countries were completely unprepared for the eventuality of substantial immigration and all exhibited difficulty in confronting the new reality at the policy level.

While these countries of Southern Europe indeed share the experience of remarkable transformation from senders to receivers of migrants, new data on immigrants in Greece allow the recognition of significant differences between the experience of Greece and that of other countries of Southern Europe. Three important features set off the migration experience of Greece: the role of former communist countries in feeding migrant flows, the proximity of source countries, and the dominance of a single source country. Contrary to the experience of other countries of Southern Europe, the vast majority of immigrants present in Greece today originate from former communist countries which are in the

process of transition to market economies and which share land borders with Greece, while the majority come from a single country, Albania. These features are likely to have important consequences for articulation of labour markets and for patterns of settlement and integration that will differentiate further the immigration experience of Greece from that of other countries of Southern Europe. These differences must be considered together with the commonalities in the migration experience of Southern European countries.

Before examining these differences in detail, an overview of recent migration trends in Greece is in order as well as a description of the 1998 regularisation programme. Data from applications submitted during this programme are utilised in the paper.

## **2. Overview of recent Greek experience**

When Greece began to receive significant numbers of immigrants in the 1970's, the composition of the immigrant population was very different than that exhibited today. Many of the foreign workers arriving in the 1970's and early 1980's were from countries of Africa and Asia such as Egypt and the Philippines. Apparently many if not most of the immigrants present in Greece at the time had valid work permits. The number of immigrants was still relatively limited; the positive migratory balance achieved in the 1970's was due largely to the return of Greek migrants from Germany and other countries of northwestern Europe.

From the mid-1980's Greece began to experience a noteworthy inflow of migrants from countries of Central and Eastern Europe when processes of liberalization began in communist regimes there. Poles were among the first who migrated, followed by Bulgarians and Romanians. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the associated abrupt changes in communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe led to intensification of movement into Greece from these areas beginning in 1989-1990. However, an even heavier inflow into Greece was soon to be observed from the independent communist regime on Greece's northern border, Albania, which was also in the throes of dismantlement.

Part of the flows from countries of the former Soviet Union and from Albania was comprised of immigrants of Greek descent who were eligible to acquire special status which allowed them to reside and work in Greece. However, the vast majority of immigrants from former communist countries were not of Greek descent and either entered illegally or overstayed their visas, with the result that the numbers of unauthorised immigrants present in Greece increased rapidly.

Greece was the last of the Southern European countries to implement a regularisation programme for unauthorised immigrants. At the time of implementation of Greece's first regularisation programme in 1998, Italy was undertaking its fourth programme, Spain had carried out three programmes and Portugal two (OECD 1999a).

Greece's regularisation procedure consisted of two stages, an initial registration or "white card" stage and the subsequent "green card" stage. All unauthorised immigrants who were already living or working in Greece by the time of issuance of the relevant decrees on November 27, 1997, were required to apply.<sup>i</sup> During the "white card" phase, January 1 to May 31, 1998, applications were submitted by 371,641 individuals.<sup>ii</sup> This is the largest number of applicants of all regularisation programmes of undocumented immigrants carried out in Europe to date, eclipsing the Italian programme of 1996, the previous "title-holder" of European regularisation programmes (Reyneri 1998) with 250,000 some applicants, as well as the concurrent 1998 Italian programme, with 308,000 some applicants (Censis 2000).<sup>iii</sup>

On the basis of the provisional tabulation of applications submitted in the first round of the Greek regularisation programme, an OECD report noted that "nearly 10% of the labour force consists of people who are in Greece illegally" (OECD 1999a: 5). Final tabulation shows that those submitting applications for regularisation represent a slightly smaller proportion of the labour force, somewhere between 8 and 9% depending on method of calculation used. This is a remarkable proportion, especially given that it is the result almost entirely of immigration over a single decade. What is even more remarkable is that this figure takes into account only one segment of the immigrant population to be found in Greece today - that submitting an application for regularisation.<sup>iv</sup>

Any attempt to estimate the size of the total immigrant population present in Greece today must of course take into account not only those who participated in the regularisation programme but immigrants of various legal statuses. Among these are the immigrants of Greek descent from the former Soviet Union and from Albania who have been granted special legal status, holders of “regular” residence permits, refugees and asylum seekers and last but not least, the unauthorised immigrants who did not participate in the regularisation programme. It has been estimated that in addition to the 371,641 unauthorised immigrants who participated, there were approximately 200,000 - 250,000 unauthorised immigrants present in early 1998, when the procedure began, who did not submit applications. In early 2000, estimates placed the sum of the undocumented and of the newly documented through regularisation, at between 600,000 and 800,000. All in all, it appears that the total number of immigrants present in Greece in 2000 approached the one million mark.

Data on the immigrants who filed applications for regularisation in 1998 offer the first real opportunity to assess and compare the composition of the heavy inflows of immigrants of non-Greek descent to Greece over the last decade. Cross-country comparison of migration statistics is notoriously difficult. Unfortunately, comparison of statistics on immigration to countries of Southern Europe is no exception. Existing figures on countries of Southern Europe do not lend themselves to easy, direct comparison. There are data on various groups of immigrants and it is not always clear to what extent these groups overlap, rendering summation of the groups a hazardous endeavor. For example, depending on the country, there are data on foreign population

with residence permits, on valid work permits, on new work permits issued in a given year, and on participants in regularisation programmes. While of course no country has accurate data as to the unauthorised immigrants within its territory, some countries do provide official estimates of their numbers. Despite such constraints that impinge on attempts at comparison, the available data indicate that there are important differences between Greece and other countries of Southern Europe in terms of features of source countries feeding the migration flows.

### **3. Differences between Greece and other countries of Southern Europe in characteristics of source countries of immigrants**

#### **3.1. The role of former communist countries in feeding migration flows**

A consideration of the geopolitical characteristics of the major source countries of immigrants present in Greece reveals that the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have played an exceptionally large role in feeding migration flows. These countries predominate among the sources of applicants for regularisation in 1998. Moreover, they are important sources of the inflow of ethnic Greeks who were granted special status by the Greek state and therefore did not participate in the regularisation procedure.

The unauthorised immigrants who filed applications in the first stage of the Greek regularisation process originate from over 120 countries. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority derives from a limited number of countries: ten countries account for 91% of the applicants. What is staggering however is the dominance of a single source country, Albania, which accounts for 65% of the applicants. The second most important source country pales by comparison: it is Bulgaria, with 7% of applications, while Romania stands third, with 4%. Following in importance are Pakistan, the Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, India, Egypt and the Philippines (**Table 2**).

A regrouping of source countries along geopolitical lines leads to the following observations. First, the three Balkan countries of Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania together account for 76% of all applications. All are former communist countries. Second, the republics of the former Soviet Union account for 8% of all applicants. The principal source countries among these are the Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Armenia. Third, the former communist countries of Central Europe account for 2% of all immigrants filing applications, Poland being the most important of these.

In total, an astounding 86% of the 371,641 immigrants filing applications for regularisation originate from a former communist country lying to the north or east of Greece<sup>y</sup> (**Table 3**). The immigrants filing applications for regularisation in 1998 who were nationals of these former communist countries would constitute approximately 7% of the total Greek labour force. However, the inflow to Greece from former communist countries is composed not only of the newly documented immigrants who participated in



the regularisation programme but also of the previously mentioned ethnic Greeks from the former Soviet Union and Albania who were granted special status.

The immigrants of Greek descent from the Soviet Union are mainly “Pontians,” whose Greek ancestors migrated during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from the Pontos region along the Black Sea to the Caucasus and northern coast of the Black Sea, and who were dispersed during the rule of Stalin to various republics of the former Soviet Union (Clogg 1992). According to the special census completed in 2000 by the General Secretariat of Repatriating Greeks, some 152,000 immigrants of Greek descent had arrived from the former Soviet Union by February 16, 2000, the main source countries being Georgia, Kazakstan and Russia (**Table 3**).

Most of the immigrants of Greek descent from Albania, or “Northern Epirotes” as they are termed in unofficial Greek parlance, originate from the southern part of Albania known to Greeks as “Northern Epirus,” which lies on the northern border of the Greek region “Epirus.” With the collapse of the communist regime of Albania and the loosening of border controls, a heavy inflow to Greece began. The inflow was composed of Albanians of both Greek and non-Greek descent. Today Albanians of Greek descent present in Greece are estimated at 100,000 individuals.

Together, the immigrants of Greek descent from the former Soviet Union and from Albania number some 250,000 individuals. If these 250,000 some immigrants of Greek descent from the former Soviet Union and Albania who are granted special status are

summed with the 320,000 some immigrants from former communist countries participating in the regularisation programme, then the total from former communist source countries is in the vicinity of 570,000. Of course there are many additional immigrants from these source countries who are present in Greece but are of illegal status.

Comparatively, the other countries of Southern Europe are much less influenced by migration flows from the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Immigrants from such source countries make up only a minor component of the immigrant populations in Spain and Portugal whereas in Italy they form an important component but nowhere near that observed of Greece.

In Spain, official data of the Home Ministry showed that in 1997 there were 224,319 non-European Union (EU) citizens resident in Spain who were of working age, representing 0,75% of all residents of working age. None of the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe or of the Soviet Union was a major source country of the foreign residents. First in importance as a source country was Morocco, accounting for one-third of the resident non-EU population of working age. Other countries with a notable share of the total were, in order of descending importance, Peru, the Dominican Republic, China, the Philippines, Argentina, Colombia, Senegal, Gambia, India, and Poland. Poland, the first former communist country to appear on the list, accounted for 2% of this immigrant, non-EU citizen, resident population (**Table 4**). If only the part of

this population that had a work permit is considered, then the most important former communist country, again Poland, accounted for 2% of the respective population.

Spain has seen three regularisation programmes since 1985. In each, Morocco was the main source country of those applying. At the top of the list of source countries of the some 43,800 applicants in the 1985-6 programme were Morocco, Portugal, Senegal and Argentina (**Table 5**). The list of important source countries contains none of the former communist countries. This is unsurprising, given that the liberalisation and loosening of emigration controls that preceded the collapse of many of the communist regimes had not yet taken on dimensions. In the Spanish regularisation programme of 1991, the top source countries of the 110,100 some applicants were Morocco, Argentina, Peru, the Dominican Republic, China and Poland. Poland, the first of former communist countries in numerical importance, accounted for 3% of the applicants. In the programme of 1996, the list of main source countries was headed by Morocco, followed by Peru, China, Argentina, Poland and the Dominican Republic. Nationals of Poland accounted for 5% of the 21,300 applicants. It should be noted however that a prerequisite for obtaining legal status in the 1996 programme was that the individual had previously held a combined work and residence permit or residence permit only (OECD 1997). Thus, recently arrived illegal immigrants would not have had the opportunity to participate.

Unfortunately, no data or estimates appear to be available on the illegal immigrant population in Spain, which might indicate source countries of more recent arrivals. It should be noted, however, that in recent reports on migration to Spain (e.g. Commission

EU 1999, Veiga 1998) there is no mention that formerly communist countries of Europe and the Soviet Union have become noteworthy sources of flows.

In Portugal, two regularisation programmes were carried out in the 1990's. Prior to the second, launched in 1996, there were 169,609 foreigners legally resident in Portugal according to Immigration Service statistics. Of these, many were nationals of European Union countries. The list of countries of origin was headed by Cape Verde with approximately 39,000 residents, followed by Brazil, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and the United Kingdom (**Table 6**).

Both Portuguese regularisation programmes were dominated by nationals of former Portuguese colonies (**Table 7**). In the 1992 programme, of the approximately 39,000 applicants, 73% were from the Portuguese-speaking African countries of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe, while 14% were from Brazil (Baganha 1998). In the 1996 programme, there were approximately 35,000 applicants, again with the majority from Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa (66%) while Brazil was the next main source (7%).

As in the case of Spain, so too for Portugal there is little information as to the national origins of the immigrant population that remains illegal and it is possible that nationals of former communist countries have a notable presence among this population. However, in recent descriptions of immigration trends in Portugal (e.g. Corkhill and Eaton 1998,

Malheiros 1998, EU 1999) there is no indication that former communist countries of Europe and the USSR have taken on an important role in feeding migration to Portugal.

In Italy, approximately 1.2 million foreigners were legally resident in 1999, constituting about 2% of the total population (Censis 2000). Among the most important source countries of the legal immigrant population were Morocco, Albania, the Philippines, the USA, Romania, Tunisia, China and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (**Table 8**).

In Italy's first three regularisation programmes, carried out in 1987-8, 1990 and 1996, nationals of Morocco were first in terms of numbers applying. Albania appeared as an important source country in 1996, accounting for 14% of the approximately 148,000 applicants (**Table 9**).

In the 1998 regularisation programme, 308,203 applications for work permits ("reservations for work") were submitted. Many of the applicants for work permits had participated in previous amnesties but no longer had valid permits. According to preliminary figures, pertaining to 71% of applications for work permits, top source countries were Albania with 18% of the applicants, Romania with 11%, Morocco with 10% and China with 9% (**Table 10**).

When grouped together, the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and of the Soviet Union appearing on the list of top 26 source countries in Italy's 1998 programme (**Table 10**) account for 34% of the applications for work permits. Assuming

that the distribution of the nationalities among the total population of applicants (308,203) is the same as that of the sample of 71% for which data are available, then those participating in the procedure from these former communist countries would number in the vicinity of 102,000 compared to Greece's some 321,000 from these source countries among the 371,000 some applicants in its regularisation programme. With respect to assessment of the total number of immigrants from former communist countries officially present in Italy, it should be noted that the previously cited 1999 figures on foreigners in Italy with residence permits include many of the foreigners who participated in the regularisation programme of 1998 and had already received their permits. In other words, these two populations in Italy - those with residence permits in 1999 and those participating in the 1998 amnesty – overlap and should not be summed when attempting to arrive at an estimate of population stocks from these former communist countries.

As for the undocumented immigrant population, the Italian Ministry of the Interior does attempt to estimate its total size as well as that of the various nationalities of which it is composed. According to its estimates for 1998, 23% of the total immigrant population was undocumented (EU 1999, Censis 2000). The largest estimated undocumented groups were the Moroccans (25,000), Albanians (19,000) and Romanians (17,000).

From the data presented above, it is apparent that more than any other country of Southern Europe, Greece has experienced an immigration impact as a result of the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Over 320,000 (86%) of the immigrants

participating in Greece's regularisation programme, the largest to date in Southern Europe, originated from former communist countries to the north and east. In addition, approximately 250,000 immigrants of Greek descent have arrived from such source countries. With respect to inflows of migrants of same ethnic origin from these source countries, only Germany of all European Union member-states appears to share a similar experience with Greece, receiving significant numbers of ethnic Germans from former communist countries. In Southern Europe, no such analogue is to be found.

With nearly 600,000 registered immigrants from the former communist countries, the migration impact on Greece of the collapse of communist regimes appears unprecedented in Southern Europe. While Italy has witnessed a notable increase in immigrants from former communist countries, the size of the immigrant population from these source countries does not compare with that of Greece even in absolute terms, let alone in relative terms, given that the estimated population of Italy in 1998 was 57.6 million compared to 10.5 for Greece (Commission EU 2000).

### **3.2. Proximity of major source countries**

Unlike other countries of Southern Europe, in the case of Greece the vast majority of immigrants comes from countries with which it shares land borders. While some of the countries of southern Europe have important inflows from source countries that lie a short distance away across a water body, immigrants from these proximate sources do not constitute a majority of the immigrants.

As seen previously, 65% (241,561 of 371,641) of immigrants registering for regularisation in Greece come from Albania, which lies on Greece's northern border. As also seen previously, Greece has received a significant inflow of ethnic Greeks from Albania. Together these two groups from Albania number over 340,000. The inclusion of unauthorised immigrants from Albania present in Greece would of course take the figure much higher.

Bulgaria, which also lies on Greece's northern border, was the second most important source country in the registration procedure, accounting for 7% of those participating. Albania and Bulgaria, which both share land borders with Greece, together account for 72% of the unauthorised immigrant population registering for regularisation.

None of the other countries of Southern Europe shares a land border with one of its major source countries. Spain and Portugal share land borders only with EU members. Italy does share a land border with a non-EU country, Slovenia. However, Slovenia is not among the top 20 nationalities of foreign residents in Italy or among the top 20 nationalities of applicants in the 1998 regularisation programme according to preliminary results of the amnesty procedure (Censis 2000).

Of course, other countries of Southern Europe do have major source countries which are separated by water but lie only a short distance away. First and foremost is Spain, which is in close proximity to its number one source country, Morocco. Of the some 224,000



non-EU citizens of working age legally resident in Spain at the end of December 1997, some 79,000 or 35% originated from Morocco. Of the remaining first ten source countries, none lies on the European continent or across the Mediterranean in the Maghreb as does Morocco. The non-EU European country with the most immigrants in Spain is Poland, which appears twelfth on the list of important source countries and was the origin of 4,162 of the 1997 residents (**Table 4**).

With respect to Portugal, as seen before the vast majority of its immigrants originates from former Portuguese colonies of Africa and South America (**Tables 6 and 7**). None of the main source countries lies in close proximity.

While Italy does not share land borders with any of its major source countries, several countries do lie a short distance across water bodies. Albania, which lies to the east across the Adriatic Sea, was the second most important source country of immigrants with residence permits in Italy in 1999, but with its 105,112 permit-holders accounted for only 9% of the total immigrant population. Tunisia, which lies south of Italy across the Mediterranean, was the number four source country of immigrants with residence permits in 1999, accounting for 4% of the immigrant population. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, lying across the Adriatic Sea to the east, was fifth on the list of main source countries in 1999, accounting for 3% of the total (**Table 8**).

With respect to the 1998 amnesty applicants of Italy (which as will be recalled overlap to some extent with the 1999 permit-holders just cited), it is observed that the number one

source country is Albania, with 39,455 applicants seeking work permits, representing 18% of total applicants according to provisional results of the programme. Romania, which lies further away, is second and Morocco, across the Mediterranean to the southwest, is third. The source countries subsequent in importance all lie a great distance away - China, Nigeria, Senegal and Bangladesh (**Table 10**).

Thus, some of the major source countries of other Southern European countries, specifically of Italy and of Spain, do lie in relatively close proximity, across water bodies. However, for Italy and Spain the numbers of immigrants from nearby source countries do not compare with those of Greece from nearby countries, either in absolute terms or in terms of their share of the total immigrant population of the respective countries. Spain and Italy have geographically diverse immigrant populations, from far-flung as well as proximate points of origin. Thus, even though some of the major source countries lie a relatively short distance away, they do not represent the bulk of immigration as is the case for Greece.

### **3.3 Dominance of a single source country**

From the data already presented on source countries of immigrants, it is clear that the immigration experience of Greece also differs from that of other countries of Southern Europe with respect to prevalence of a single source country. As seen, 65% of the immigrants participating in the Greek regularisation programme originated from Albania

while the second most important country, Bulgaria, accounted for only 7%. No similar degree of dominance is to be found in the other three countries of southern Europe.

In the case of Spain, the most important source country is Morocco. In 1997 one-third of non-EU residents of working age were from Morocco. It was the main source country in the three regularisation programmes carried out in 1985, 1991, and 1996, accounting for 18%, 45% and 33% of the applicants respectively (**Table 5**).

The main source countries for Portugal are Cape Verde and Angola. Cape Verde accounted for 23% of legal foreign residents in 1996 while Angola headed the list of source countries in the regularisation programmes of 1992 and 1996, accounting respectively for 32% and 26% of participants, far from the percentage recorded by Albanians in the Greek programme (**Tables 6 and 7**).

In Italy, the most numerous foreign nationality legally resident in 1999 was the Moroccan, which accounted for 12% of this population. Moroccans were also the most numerous nationality in the regularisation programmes of 1987-8, 1990 and 1996 but at their peak accounted for 23% of the applicants while the Albanians who were the main nationality in the 1998 programme accounted for only 18% of participants (**Tables 8, 9 and 10**).

## 4. Discussion

The migration experience of Greece differs then from that of other Southern European countries. While diverse, farflung points of origin account for significant proportions of the immigrant population in Spain, Portugal and Italy, the overwhelming majority of immigrants in Greece come from former communist countries which happen to lie on Greece's northern border while there is strong dominance by only one of these, Albania.

Subsequent to the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, there was great concern and discussion about the potential immigration impact the collapse might have on Western countries (Castles and Miller 1993). However, mass migration from these sources on the scale envisaged in various scenarios did not occur (Zlotnik 1999). As stated in the 1999 Sopemi Report (OECD 1999b: 61): "Contrary to certain alarmist forecasts, the opening of national borders in Central and Eastern Europe following the political changes of the late 1980s have, as yet, not resulted in massive population movements towards OECD countries."

This indeed appears to be the case on the whole. However, if the experiences of various countries on the receiving end are compared, it appears that the opening of borders of formerly communist regimes has had a very important immigration impact on some countries. Greece is one such country. The presence of nearly 600,000 recognised immigrants from these source countries (inclusion of the unauthorised immigrant

population would take the total much higher) is very significant among a total population of 10.5 million.

The major immigration impact that Greece has been subject to as a result of the collapse of communist regimes has probably not been widely recognised for several reasons. First, there was little data available on immigrants in Greece, other than that concerning immigrants of Greek descent. The data on immigrants applying for regularisation presented above allow assessment for the first time of numbers and nationalities involved.

Second, attention with respect to potential destination countries of potential immigration from crumbling communist regimes was focused primarily on the eastern flank of the European Union, specifically, Germany and Austria, whose geographical position and level of economic development was considered to render them prime target countries for migrants. Indeed Germany appears to have been the main European destination country of the East-West flows immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union and of its allies. After 1993 however, inflows to Germany and many other EU countries diminished greatly, due largely to the restrictive policies that came into force in the host countries (OECD 2000a).

Third, Albania, the main source country of immigration to Greece, has not been a major focus of analysts of migration trends from former communist countries. Not only is it a country with a small population, estimated at 3.5 million, but it was a political loner

among communist countries. Attention has focused, unsurprisingly, on the countries of the Warsaw Pact, the major bloc of communism, from whence truly massive, in terms of numbers involved, population movements could occur. Recently, migration trends in the CEEC's (Central and East European countries) have been a subject of renewed interest due to discussions about enlargement of the European Union to include some of these countries and the related concern that there might be massive flows to present member-states of the European Union when and if these countries become members (e.g. OECD 2000a and OECD 2000b). Given that Albania is not a candidate for EU membership in the near future, it is not surprising that there is scant mention of Albania or of migration flows from Albania in this new literature on migration flows in the CEEC's.

That the immigration experience of Greece has been shaped overwhelmingly by the collapse of communist regimes in countries with which it shares borders has not been adequately taken account of to date in discussions of immigration in Southern Europe. For example, in what appears to be the most systematic attempt to date to build a "South European model of immigration" (King 2000), various socio-economic processes which have formed the context for the creation of demand for immigrant labour in countries of Southern Europe including Greece are fruitfully identified, but the geographical and geopolitical context and features of source countries identified are not similarly successful in representing the Greek experience.

Prominent in King's model is the "development divide" running across the Mediterranean from east to west which has become the new "migration frontier,"

replacing the migration divide between Northern and Southern Europe of yesteryear. As succinctly put by King, this divide across the Mediterranean is the “Rio Grande” of Europe. In the case of Greece, however, another fault line or “Rio Grande” has been of primary importance in shaping migration flows: that demarcating the former communist countries of Europe.

Furthermore, a key feature of King’s model of immigration into Southern Europe is the “multiplicity and heterogeneity of migrant nationalities and types” (King 2000: 12) which is contrasted with the model of immigration from Southern to Northern Europe in previous decades when the immigrant population of each destination country was composed of one or very few groups (such as Italians, Yugoslavs or Turks). Precisely due to this feature of heterogeneity and far-flung points of origin, neither proximity nor dominance by a single source country figures in King’s model but as has been seen, they are particularly relevant in the Greek case.

Thus, in terms of geographical and geopolitical context, the experience of Greece differs from that of other countries of southern Europe. This should be taken account of in future attempts to analyse the phenomenon of immigration in Southern Europe. The intersection, on the one hand, of the common processes identified by King as creating demand for immigrant labour in countries of Southern Europe with different geographical and geopolitical contexts, on the other hand, can lead to very different national experiences with immigration.

Even though presentday communication and transport systems have diminished the decisiveness of proximity in migration dynamics, there is no doubt that proximity continues to play an important role in shaping migration patterns, affecting the length of stay and the frequency of trips back to the source country. Moreover, it facilitates circular and pendular migration. Due to the proximity of its source countries, Greece may experience different patterns of immigration and settlement than those characteristic of other countries of Southern Europe, whose source countries lie further away.

Furthermore, the dominance of a single sending country which shares borders with the receiving country sets the stage for unique articulation of labour markets and economies of these countries.<sup>vi</sup> A major implication of proximity and dominance of flows by a single source country is dense entanglement of labour markets and economies of host and source. Labour demand and supply in the two countries sharing the border adapt and adjust to each other. The fact that in the case of Greece the strongly dominant source country is a former communist country on a particularly rocky road of transition to a market economy and whose economic institutions are in great flux (Perlmutter 1998, Muco 2001) may indeed accelerate the process of entanglement.

While proximity is not a precondition for close entanglement of economies and labour markets, especially given current technologies of communication and transportation, it undoubtedly facilitates its development. Moreover, proximity makes it even more difficult to disrupt the pattern of articulation that has evolved between labour markets of sender and receiver when stricter control of migration is attempted.



## **5. Conclusion**

While Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal have all been transformed from senders to receivers of migrants in recent decades, only in the case of Greece do flows overwhelmingly originate from former communist countries of Europe and the Soviet Union. The special immigration impact experienced by Greece as the result of the collapse of communist regimes is largely due to its proximity to these and to the sizeable Greek minorities that were to be found within their borders.

Proximity of source countries also distinguishes the Greek immigration experience from that of other countries of Southern Europe. The great majority of immigrants to Greece come from countries with which it shares borders. Also distinct in the Greek experience is the exceptional dominance of a single source country.

These differences in features of source countries have important implications which may cause the Greek engagement with immigration to diverge from that of other countries of Southern Europe. It is likely they will result in different patterns of migration, settlement and integration as well as different forms of articulation of labour markets and economies of host countries and source countries. The policy implications of these differences are in need of exploration.

**Table 1. Greece: Main nationalities  
corresponding to residence  
permits issued\*, 1997**

	<b>Number (thousands)</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Russian Federation</b>	<b>13.0</b>	17
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>6.1</b>	8
<b>Albania</b>	<b>4.4</b>	6
<b>Romania</b>	<b>3.3</b>	4
<b>Egypt</b>	<b>3.3</b>	4
<b>Former Yugoslavia</b>	<b>3.0</b>	4
<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>2.9</b>	4
<b>United States</b>	<b>2.5</b>	3
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>2.5</b>	3
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>2.4</b>	3
<b>Cyprus</b>	<b>2.4</b>	3
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>2.2</b>	3
<b>Poland</b>	<b>2.2</b>	3
<b>Germany</b>	<b>1.8</b>	2
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>1.8</b>	2
<b>Syria</b>	<b>1.2</b>	2
<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>1.1</b>	1
<b>Italy</b>	<b>0.9</b>	1
<b>Other</b>	<b>17.5</b>	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>74.5</b>	100

*\* Data refer to total number of permits issued. One person can be granted several permits per year. However a large majority of the permits are delivered for one year and a small number of persons receive more than one permit. Data include ethnic Greeks.*

*Source: O.E.C.D., Trends in International Migration, SOPEMI, 1999 edition.*

**Table 2. Greece: Main nationalities of immigrants participating in regularisation programme, 1998**

Country	Immigrants	as % of all immigrants participating
Albania	241,561	65
Bulgaria	25,168	7
Romania	16,954	4
Pakistan	10,933	3
Ukraine	9,821	3
Poland	8,631	2
Georgia	7,548	2
India	6,405	2
Egypt	6,231	2
Philippines	5,383	1
Moldova	4,396	1
Syria	3,434	1
Russia	3,139	1
Bangladesh	3,024	1
Irak	2,833	1
Armenia	2,734	1
Fed. Rep. Yugoslavia	2,335	1
Nigeria	1,746	0
Ethiopia	931	0
Sri Lanka	820	0
Other	7,614	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>371,641</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Cavounidis (forthcoming)*

**Table 3. Greece: Immigrants from former communist countries**

Immigrants from former communist countries participating in regularisation programme, 1998			Immigrants of Greek descent from former Soviet Union		Immigrants of Greek descent from Albania	
Country	Immigrants	as % of all immigrants participating	Country	Immigrants		
Albania	241,561	65	Georgia	79,061		
Bulgaria	25,168	7	Kazakstan	31,410		
Romania	16,954	4	Russia	22,826		
Ukraine	9,821	3	Armenia	8,838		
Poland	8,631	2	Ukraine	4,218		
Georgia	7,548	2	Uzbekistan	3,418		
Moldova	4,396	1	Other	2,433		
Russia	3,139	1				
Armenia	2,734	1				
Other	1,054	0				
<b>Total of Above</b>	<b>321,006</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>152,204</b>	<b>Estimated total</b>	<b>100,000</b>

*Source: Cavounidis (forthcoming), General Secretariat of Repatriated Greek (Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace) and General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)*

**Table 4. Spain: Main non-EU nationalities of foreigners aged 16-64 legally resident, 1997**

	Number	%
Morocco	79,344	35
Peru	16,505	7
Dominican Republic	13,117	6
China	12,401	6
Philippines	8,637	4
Argentina	8,240	4
Colombia	4,801	2
Senegal	4,663	2
Gambia	4,211	2
India	4,176	2
Poland	4,162	2
Algeria	4,107	2
Other non-EU countries	59,955	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>224,319</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Commission of the European Union, Employment Observatory, System Trends No. 32, 1999*

**Table 5. Spain: Main nationalities of immigrants participating in regularisation programmes**

1985-6			1991			1996		
Number (thousands)	%		Number (thousands)	%		Number (thousands)	%	
Morocco	7.9	18	Morocco	49.2	45	Morocco	7.0	33
Portugal	3.8	9	Argentina	7.5	7	Peru	1.9	9
Senegal	3.6	8	Peru	5.7	5	China	1.4	7
Argentina	2.9	7	Dominican Republic	5.5	5	Argentina	1.3	6
United Kingdom	2.6	6	China	4.2	4	Poland	1.1	5
Philippines	1.9	4	Poland	3.3	3	Dominican Republic	0.8	4
Other Countries	21.1	48	Other Countries	34.7	32	Other countries	7.8	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>110.1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: O.E.C.D., "Some Lessons from Recent Regularisation programmes", 1999*

**Table 6. Portugal: Main nationalities of foreigners legally resident, 1996**

	Number	%
Cape Verde	38,993	23
Brazil	19,967	12
Angola	16,019	9
Guinea- Bissau	12,450	7
United kingdom	11,599	7
Spain	8,958	5
United States	8,479	5
Germany	7,540	4
France	4,845	3
Venezuela	4,445	3
Mozambique	4,369	3
Sao Tome & Principe	4,123	2
Other countries	27,822	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>169,609</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: O.E.C.D, "The 1996 Amnesty Programme in Portugal", 1997*

**Table 7. Portugal: Main nationalities of immigrants participating in regularisation programmes**

	1992		1996		
	Number	%	Number	%	
Angola	12,525	32	Angola	9,258	26
Guinea-Bissau	6,877	18	Cape Verde	6,872	20
Cape Verde	6,778	17	Guinea-Bissau	5,308	15
Brazil	5,346	14	Brazil	2,330	7
S. Tome Princ.	1,408	4	Pakistan	1,745	5
Senegal	1,397	4	China	1,608	5
China	1,352	3	S. Tome Princ.	1,549	4
Mozambique	757	2	Mozambique	416	1
Other countries	2,726	7	Other countries	5,996	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,166</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>35,082</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: M. Baganha, "Immigrant involvement in the informal economy: The Portuguese case," Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 24(2): 367-385, 1998*

**Table 8. Italy : Main nationalities of foreigners legally resident, 1999**

	Number	%
Morocco	139,305	12
Albania	105,112	9
Philippines	59,985	5
USA	47,377	4
Romania	46,568	4
Tunisia	42,493	4
China (PRC)	44,115	4
Fed. Rep. of Yugoslavia	37,677	3
Germany	35,050	3
Senegal	34,041	3
Sri Lanka	28,816	2
Egypt	26,749	2
Poland	26,704	2
Peru	25,726	2
France	24,960	2
India	23,911	2
United Kingdom	22,347	2
Brazil	17,810	1
Switzerland	17,422	1
Croatia	15,425	1
Other	379,740	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,201,333</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Censis, "Immigration and Foreign Presence in Italy 1998-1999, Sopemi Report," Rome 2000.*

**Table 9. Italy : Main nationalities of immigrants participating in regularisation programmes**

	1987-1988		1990		1996*			
	Number Thousands	%	Number Thousands	%	Number Thousands	%		
Morocco	21.7	18	Morocco	49.9	23	Morocco	23.0	16
Sri Lanka	10.7	9	Tunisia	25.5	12	Albania	20.2	14
Philippines	10.7	9	Senegal	17.0	8	Philippines	18.6	13
Tunisia	10.0	8	Former Yugoslavia	11.3	5	China	8.9	6
Senegal	8.4	7	Philippines	8.7	4	Peru	8.8	6
Former Yugoslavia	7.1	6	China	8.3	4	Romania	5.9	4
Other	50.1	42	Other	97.1	45	Other	62.4	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>118.7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>217.8</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>147.8</b>	

*\* A Total of 258,761 applications were received but the provisional results, broken down by nationality, cover only permits granted for reasons of work.*

*Source : O.E.C.D, "Some Lessons from Recent Regularisation Programmes, " 1999*

**Table 10. Italy : Main nationalities of immigrants submitting "reservations for work" in 1998 regularization programme, provisional results pertaining to 218, 221 of 308,203 cases**

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Reservations for Work</b>	<b>As % of all reservations</b>
Albania	39,455	18
Romania	23,456	11
Morocco	22,469	10
China	19,121	9
Nigeria	11,648	5
Senegal	10,826	5
Bangladesh	9,876	4
India	7,173	3
Pakistan	6,844	3
Poland	6,614	3
Ghana	6,329	3
Tunisia	5,940	3
Egypt	5,836	3
Algeria	4,959	2
Ecuador	3,476	2
Yugoslavia	3,357	1
Makedonia	3,051	1
Sri Lanka	2,836	1
Peru	2,420	1
Philippines	1,996	1
Ukraine	1,772	1
Bosnia	1,446	1
Moldavia	1,392	0,5
Colombia	1,295	0,5
Bulgaria	1,292	0,5
Ivory Coast	1,045	0,5
Other	12,297	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>218,221</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Censis, "Immigration and Foreign Presence in Italy 1998-1999, Sopemi Report," Rome 2000.*

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## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> See Skordas (2000) for details of the provisions concerning regularisation.

<sup>ii</sup> It should be noted that official tabulations first placed the total at 373,196 (based on numbers quoted to the central authority by local offices where applications were submitted), then at 369, 629 (after data from applications had been entered on computer), while the figure 371,641, was arrived at when boxes of applications inadvertently set aside were discovered.

<sup>iii</sup> It should be noted, however, that in the second or "green card" stage of the Greek programme, which required proof of legal employment as well as proof of participation in the first stage, fewer immigrants, specifically 212,860, submitted applications. Thus, in terms of numbers of immigrants actually gaining a residence and work permit, the Greek regularisation programme may well be surpassed by the concurrent Italian programme of 1998, whose applications were still being processed in 2000.

<sup>iv</sup> A recent classification (OECD 1999b) of countries according to size of the foreign or foreign-born proportion of total employment distinguished three groups. In the first group, with proportions of the foreign or foreign born varying from 55% to 18%, were Luxembourg, Australia, Canada and Switzerland. In the second group, with proportions between 10 and 5% were the United States, Austria, Germany, Belgium, France and Sweden, while the third group contained Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Japan, with foreign proportions of total employment at less than 5%. As for Greece, consideration of only that segment of the immigrant population that submitted an application in the first round of the regularisation programme would place Greece at the top end of the second group.

<sup>v</sup> It should be noted that the states of the former Yugoslavia have not been included in this tally of immigrants originating from former Communist regimes, due to the idiomorphic character of its economic system.

<sup>vi</sup> I am indebted to Demetrios Papademetriou for pointing out the significance of these differences in features of source countries for the articulation of labour markets.