Challenges to the integrity of a European migration program: Greece as the recalcitrant state

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National Europe Centre Paper No. 75

Paper presented to conference entitled
The Challenges of Immigration and Integration in the European Union and Australia,
18-20 February 2003, University of Sydney
Abstract: There have been dramatic transformations in the migration regulatory environment across Europe that has followed in the wake of a new wave of immigration that commenced in the late 1980s/early 1990s. The European Union has led initiatives, especially through the instrument of the Schengen Treaty, and directly and indirectly sought to coordinate policy formation across the European landscape. This has been particularly important in engendering policy formation in the Mediterranean member states of the EU which, formerly countries of emigration, are now significant destinations for migrants entering Europe. However, the regulatory frameworks within the respective Mediterranean nation-states are decidedly uneven. Nowhere is this unevenness more pronounced than in Greece. The legislative developments have tended to be ill-considered and inconsistent and lack the institutional force of the state to establish any meaningful measures for the regulation of the movement of people.

The study seeks to unravel the dynamics of state formation by critically assessing the integrity of the efforts of the Greek government to establish the frameworks and institutions to regulate the movement of people. It will examine how the rhetoric of the political will of the state to meet EU standards has been circumscribed by the lack of coordination of policy across relevant state apparatuses. It will elaborate the implications of this for labour market formation by focusing on the effectiveness of policy in managing the entry of migrant workers into the Greek labour market. This provides the foundation for considering the effect of state intervention, and the different social and political forces that shape state interventions, in institutionalising the place of migrant workers within the labour market and, in the process, structuring labour market experience. Attention will concentrate particularly on the position of the different cohorts of migrant women workers to examine the differential impacts of state policy in underscoring labour market segmentation.
Introduction: The transformation of the Greek labour market: a country of recent immigration

Greece, once a country of mass emigration, was transformed into a country of immigration over the course of the 1990s. This change in the movement of people reflected regional pressures, especially following the collapse of communism in the former Eastern bloc which brought an influx of repatriate ethnic Greeks as well as many Eastern Europeans. The immigration of people of Greek origin – the return of the Greek diaspora – has also been an important source of migrants, as has the settlement of women and to a lesser extent men who have married Greek citizens. But, the development that has really underscored the significance of this transformation in the make-up of Greek society and its political economy, has been the immigration of peoples from neighbouring non-EU countries and others from beyond the immediate region.

The large-scale immigration of Albanians, Eastern Europeans and migrants from a range of origins in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, South East Asia and more recently East Asia has brought a new cosmopolitanism to Greece. The changing pattern in the movement of people has resulted in a transformation in the composition of the labour market, with foreign workers accounting for as much as ten per cent of the workforce. Migrant workers are employed in a wide range of vocations, skilled and unskilled although the majority tend to be concentrated in unskilled employment. (This is a noticeably larger percentage than in other Mediterranean member states of the EU which also experienced a turnaround in migration over the course of the 1990s.) The significance of the transformation in the labour market lies not only in the increased reliance upon migrant labour but also in the fact that the overwhelming proportion of migrant workers is undocumented. This partly reflects the rapid turnaround in the pattern of people movement and the lack of institutional instruments possessed by the state with which to regulate migration – a situation that was mirrored in each of the Mediterranean member states of the EU.

More importantly, however, the continuing significance of the unregulated movement of people into Greece points to systemic weaknesses in the regulatory and management constitution of the modern Mediterranean state. This clearly poses a challenge in terms of the Greek state’s ability to conform to the European Union ambitions to restrict the traffic in undocumented migrants. But this also raises two more immediate issues. Firstly, the significance of unregulated migration speaks volumes about the form and structure of the Greek political economy, and especially in terms of the importance of the ‘hidden economy’, of that sphere that exists beyond the regulatory reach of the state. The measure of the ‘hidden economy’ has also become bound up with the immigration of undocumented workers. Secondly, the capacity of the state to effect some degree of control over people movement and to regularise the position of migrants has implications for labour market formation. More particularly,

1 The most noteworthy groups include Pontians from the former USSR and Northern Eperotes from Albania.
2 The rate of return among Greek emigrants and the settlement of ethnic Greeks born to emigrants is more significant than for any other comparable national group in Europe.
undocumented migrant workers face repercussions in terms of employment opportunities and workplace status.

The study seeks to unravel the differential impacts of state policy in underscoring labour market segmentation and its deleterious consequences. The dynamics of state formation will be assessed as a prelude to analysing the efforts of the Greek government to establish the frameworks and institutions to regulate the movement of people. It will elaborate the implications of this for labour market formation by focusing on the effectiveness of policy in managing the entry of migrant workers into the Greek labour market and how this has structured labour market experience. Attention will concentrate particularly on the position of the different cohorts of migrant women workers to examine the differential impacts of state policy.

*The character and organisation of the state in the Greek political economy*

The integrity and effectiveness of Greece’s policies to regulate immigrants is necessarily reflective of the state of the Greek polity which, in one word, is best described as idiosyncratic. Political processes are characterised by deeply entrenched networks of patronage and clientelist relations. This is in part the result of past political tribulations. It is as well a product of the endeavours of successive governments to lock in political support by redistributing financial resources to the advantage of industrial and other interests that are supportive of the government or particular ministers while denying comparable assistance to those interests that may have backed political adversaries. Policy formulation has consequently been an inherently politicised process framed by patronage and clientelism (or as this is sometimes expressed in Greek, \( \mu\varepsilon\sigma\varphi\varphi\nu \)).

Clientelism and patronage have also effected the very institutional organisation and focus of the state itself. Because the state has been an important site for securing the political interests of the different parties and factions within the parties, ministries and departmental organisation have become imbued with a political instrumentalism that make for administrative and managerial rigidities (Mossialos and Mitson 2000; Papakostas 2001; Sotiropoulos 1999). This is most obviously manifest in the design and implementation of policies being framed by particular interests. It is evident in the systemic obstruction of organisational coherence and in frustrating any unity of purpose across the state as a whole, as well as within individual departments. The general lack of administrative and organisational integrity is reinforced by the different ways in which clientelism and patronage contribute to institutionalising the abuse of office by public servants. Corruption within public administration, at all levels of the state and throughout the nation, is an acknowledged problem contributing to the ineffectiveness of policy (GRECO 2002; Transparency International 2001; Papakostas 2001; *Kathimerini* 30 January 2003).

The systems of patronage and clientelism also frame personnel policies within the state, determining not only senior appointments but employment opportunities and appointment preferences generally.
This partly explains the continuing significance of the state as an employer. The state remains the single most important employer in Greece and appears to be well resourced when compared with its European counterparts. However, the reality is that the nepotistic employment practices make for a decided lack of professionalism in public administration. The resultant inefficiencies in the administrative functioning of the state have been made worse by the general lack of commitment to and investment in the training of public servants. The dearth of investment in upgrading physical infrastructure exacerbates all of these problems.

The paradox of the Greek polity is encapsulated in the state, in an institution that both exercises considerable authority and influence over economic and political life and simultaneously comparatively little. This paradox is replicated in the organisation and structure of the economy. Through the exercise of state authority, via its ability to marshal financial resources and directly engage in a range of productive and other economic endeavours, and through the intricate webs of personal and corporate connections, the state has directly influenced the structure of the economy. The viability and integrity of different arenas of the economy have been contingent upon the support of the state. Yet this has been a qualified process. Clientelist relations and systems of patronage, often shaped by particular factional interests, have framed the support afforded different industries and enterprises. Any sense that the state has engineered a general development program focused on the economy as a whole has been qualified by these institutional arrangements. The longer-term consequence of this has been that the development of the economy has been somewhat circumscribed; key industries have not modernised, have become backward looking remained underdeveloped.

The polarity in the regulatory authority of the state is inscribed in other ways in the structure of the economy. The most noteworthy manifestation is the dichotomy between the formal sphere and the informal and ‘hidden’ sphere. In the former, economic activity is dominated by transparency in the activities that are transacted, and thereby subject to the formal authority of the state. Transactions are ‘formal’ and recorded, all sources of income declared, with associated taxation and social security payment obligations accordingly met. The other sphere is organised around the cash economy. Exchanges of goods and services that are not invoiced in this sphere. Some transactions, which would otherwise be legal, are organised to avoid the administrative and time consuming reach of the state or to escape taxation and social security obligations. Such practices based on cash exchanges are evident in the agricultural sector, the tourism and hospitality industry through to manufacturing. The local markets, the *laiki*, are a noteworthy illustration of this, as is the increasingly important ‘informal sector’ of paid domestic labour. By contrast, there are other transactions whose legal status is of a different magnitude, executed with the object of deliberately evading laws that criminally proscribed. Such transactions, in the so-called ‘hidden economy’ or ‘black economy’, occur right across the spectrum of the Greek economy, and include the ‘under-the-counter’ cash transactions, the *φάκελακι* (or

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3 Public sector employment accounts for xx per cent of total official employment.
envelope) delivered to state officials to hasten or ensure the provision of public services. It also includes ‘black market’ activities such as the distribution of illicit drugs and supply of sex workers.

The significance of this schism in the structure of the political economy in part lies in the actual physical magnitude of the ‘hidden economy’. The ‘hidden economy’ in Greece represents a realm of unregulated economic activity greater than any other member state of the European Union, with ‘black’ corrupt economic transactions alone reckoned by conservative estimates to account for one third of economic activity (GRECO 2001; The Athens News 10 January 2003; Kathimerini 1 March 2002, 22 January 2003). Equally important, however, is that the level of unregulated and corrupt activity highlights the lack of integrity in the organisation of the state, while the magnitude of the ‘hidden economy’ provides a measure of the lack of reach in state governance of the economy as well as some idea of the limited purchase of the regulatory authority of the state. The recent failure of the national government to implement a policy requiring merchants to record all transactions and issue receipts (in place of cash transactions), illustrates just how politically potent open resistance is to efforts to assert the authority of the state over the economy. In part this is simply the reaction of sectors of the economy where the viability of businesses has become conditional on avoiding the payment of taxation and other social obligations. But it also indicates a more inherent disinclination, indeed a national cultural disposition, to conduct economic transactions openly. It is as well as an ostensibly political position, as is the case of those who regard tax evasion as a symbolic and systemic form of resistance to the state generally and, by some classes, to the rule of the socialist PASOK government more particularly. More clandestine forms of evasion have been in evidence in the wake of the liberalisation of financial markets in the mid-1990s, which resulted in an influx of ‘black money’ from Russia and some former Eastern bloc countries being laundered in Greece.

The purchase of the ‘hidden economy’ is evidence of the systemic inefficiencies that define the Greek state as much as it is the collective result of incompetent and corrupt public servants. But it is also important to recognise that the double institutional schism, of the regulatory force of the state and of the economy, has been self-reinforcing. Tax evasion most obviously contributes to the lack of capacity within the state, limiting the resources at its disposal with which it could assert more authority over the political economy. The clientelism and the patronage that structures business opportunities likewise becomes self-reinforcing. State-assured monopoly privileges enjoyed by some enterprises and sectors of the economy lock in material advantages which businesses want to maintain, thereby institutionalising incentives for the maintenance of clientelist relations and simultaneously directing attention away from investing in the modernisation of plant, equipment and administrative processes. On the other hand, those sectors of the economy that do not benefit from the largesse of the state seek

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4 Such payments have become a notorious feature in securing medical services.
5 This is evident among manufacturing enterprises, in the agricultural sector and in the tourism and hospitality industry, although tax avoidance is not simply a product of the precarious position of enterprises.
6 This is generally considered to be the cause of the speculative boom of the stock market.
to avoid any responsibilities towards contributing to the funds at the disposal of the state. In both instances, the material resources at the disposal of the state are compromised as is the capacity of the state to extend its authority.

**The state and the management of migration**

The transformation of Greece from a country of emigration to one of immigration points to another way in which the adequacy and exercise of state authority has been played out. The lack of force in the regulatory authority of the state is manifest in the growing significance of migrants in the labour market over the 1990s, and the deployment of migrant workers a reflection of employers endeavours to consciously circumvent, or sidestep, the authority of the state and the obligations that that entailed. The precarious state of key sectors of the economy in the latter part of the 1980s and into the 1990s, in the face of there not being any clear state-initiated economic strategies to redress the problems confronting the economy, impelled resort to migrant labour. The employment of undocumented migrant workers became a means of reducing business costs, enabling employers to more easily avoid minimum wage standards and other obligations, most notably the statutory obligation to pay social security insurance and relevant taxes. The most vulnerable sector of the economy was agriculture, and the problems facing this sector were compounded by a shortage of labour consequent upon the population exodus to the cities. The employment of migrant workers became critical to the future of the industry.

Another important factor shaping the structural transformation of the Greek political economy has been the growth of paid work in the informal sector consequent upon the increasing participation of women in waged work. Urbanisation and women’s employment have brought changes to household and familial organisation which have encouraged employment of domestic workers and paid home-based carers, the overwhelming proportion of whom are migrant women. Paid domestic work has not been subject to any meaningful industrial regulation, and with many migrant women undocumented, the growth in this informal sector of the economy is symptomatic of the limited regulatory reach of the state.

Government and the state have been tardy in responding to the changing pattern of people movement, and this must be regarded as reflective of the state of the Greek polity. We can identify several factors influencing the hesitancy in the formulation of migration management policies. There has clearly been a lack of organisational capacity that is necessary for enabling the different divisions of the state to join forces and formulate policy. There is also the evident lack of administrative capacity that would have frustrated the coordination and implementation of policy. But it is also necessary to note the want of

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7 While there are few reliable sources to establish the magnitude of the reliance upon migrant workers, recent research on agricultural enterprise suggests that as much as 90 per cent of the non-family work force employed on farms that employ a non-family member for farm work are immigrant workers. The great majority of immigrant workers are Albanians (Lakasas 2002; see also Kassimis, 2002). There are also substantial numbers of Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrant workers engaged in seasonal work.
any substantive political will that would have brought the various ministers and their departments together to envisage and develop policy; clientelist and patronage relations have tended to focus the concerns and energies of politicians and policy makers on matters other than state management in the interests of the nation as a whole. It can be equally argued that there has been some political mileage in the government not acting to regulate the employment of migrants. In some instances this is likely to have been driven by politically calculated motives, in the interests of clientelist ties. Thus in the agricultural sector, the immediate and continued employment of migrant labour is regarded as imperative to the viability of the industry. In the context of the now considerable reliance upon undocumented migrant workers, it is not in the interests of those politicians representing rural constituencies to either progress arguments in support of regulating the flow of migrant labour or to bring pressure to bear on local authorities to restrict the employment of migrant workers. Moreover, given the clientelist foundations of local state administrative systems and the interests of public officials in supporting local employers, it would have been quite a challenge to implement any strategies that blocked access to the employment of migrant workers.

In other instances, the motivation may not be so scheming, more a reaction to immediate pressures. For instance, the deployment of migrant workers has been justified as simply a short-term or stop-gap measure to resolve an immediate labour supply problem, as is the case in the building and construction industry which experiences difficulties in attracting Greek-born workers (notwithstanding the fact that the need will be ongoing). Alternatively, the reluctance to progress debate on migration policy has been based on the belief that some categories of work in which migrants are employed are largely economically and politically inconsequential. This is the case with respect to work undertaken in the informal sector, and not the ‘real economy’, of domestic work which continues not to be subject to any meaningful industrial regulation. However socially significant such employment is regarded, it is quite generally considered inappropriate for government to be intervening in the personal contractual relations of the family and household (this is especially the case regarding domestic labour). For the apparent not dissimilar rationale that the state should not be interfering in the personal affairs of its citizens, the government has been reluctant to better regulate the sex industry which has become increasingly reliant upon migrant workers.

The failure to develop policy must also be regarded as reflective of the difficulties that have existed in developing policy within the state. The factional politics that frame the party system, and the clientelist relations which are founded on these, define departmental agendas. These engender inefficiencies, and along with the entrenched patronage underscore the lack of coordination across departments. Such relations frustrate any sense of purpose in the bureaucracy’s ability to formulate advice on the need for, let alone the design of, systems to manage the flow of people. Moreover, these institutional barriers

8 The state support that has been afforded immigrants has invariably been directed towards assisting repatriate Greek communities, and the assistance has been influenced by the political advantages that flow from that support.
would have been compounded by the difficulties in establishing concrete management systems given the generally fractured and disarticulated nature of the state. Finally, the state’s capacity to invest in any people movement management measures must also have been limited by financial capacity of the state to establish the necessary administrative instruments with which to regulate migration. And this material constraint on the role of the state merely reinforces the problem because the lack of regulatory force of the state impels the growth of the ‘hidden economy’ foreclosing still further possible sources of state revenue.

Labour market segmentation – the polarity of economy and schismatic labour market

The polarity that shapes the Greek polity and economy has subjected the labour market formation to this same process of bifurcation. The influx of migrant workers has contributed to deepening the schismatic character of the political economy and the structure of employment in Greece. The employment of migrant workers has added other layers to a labour market that was already highly segmented. Historically, employment patterns have been marked by the significance of the state as an employer, within public administration, the public services of education, communications and health, and state-owned enterprises, on the one hand, and the extremely high proportion of the population who are either self-employed or who work for small enterprises, most notably in agriculture and the tourist and hospitality industries, on the other. Whilst there has been a decline in the number of recorded agricultural workers, as is evident by reference to Table 1 the agricultural sector continues to occupy a larger proportion of the work force than is the case in other Mediterranean member states of the European Union.\[9\]

The proportion of the work force designated as ‘self-employed’ is significantly greater than other Mediterranean member states of the European Union, as is evident by the data presented in Table 2. While this indicates a decline over the period 1991-2001 in the proportion of the work force that is self-employed, the magnitude of this decline may well be exaggerated because of the level of ‘hidden unemployment’ that is encapsulated in the comparatively low labour market participation rates noted in Table 3. This would seem to be especially the case with respect to women.

\[9\] The actual number of agricultural workers is likely to be more substantial given that many of the actual workers, and particularly women workers as well as migrant workers, are undocumented and therefore ‘hidden’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>agriculture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU av</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: CEC (2001: 110)

In large measure, the structure of the Greek labour market is reflective of the rigidities associated with the distinct character of the Greek polity and the way in which this has underscored the make-up of the economy. Employment within the state is to a large extent predicated on patronage associated with party or factional allegiances, including union membership, and other personal connections. A not dissimilar process shapes employment within banking and insurance. With security of employment, the lack of transparency and intricate webs that influence work opportunities establish this sphere of work as within the core, or primary, labour market. Some spheres of the industrial sector of the economy also share this status, although the backward state of manufacturing industry has generated pressures that are challenging this standing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-employment</th>
<th>Part time</th>
<th>Fixed term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU av</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Unemployment and participation rates in southern Europe, by gender and educational level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>M RATES OF</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;u.s. = u.s.</td>
<td>tertiary</td>
<td>&lt;u.s. = u.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU av</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD (2001a: Table D, Statistical Annex)

Notes: <u.s. = less than upper secondary education
        = u.s. = completed upper secondary education

In contrast, with the formal regulation of conditions of employment and rates of remuneration in the ‘commanding heights’ of the economy, most employment is concentrated in spheres which remain de jure unregulated or without any formal regulation or industrial protection. Comparatively poorer remuneration, more precarious and insecure terms of employment and relatively poor working conditions tend to characterise work in these spheres. While personal connections and networks have some bearing on employment opportunities in this secondary labour, they are not as developed, or as important in shoring up terms and conditions as they are in the formal sphere of the economy. In short, such positions exhibit many of the classic features of work in secondary labour markets. The consequence is that the terms and of conditions are more likely to be determined by the employer and more likely to be adjusted in response to the vagaries of the economy. The labour market rigidities that characterise work in the formal sphere are not as evident in the secondary labour market, and this in part explains why part-time work remains relatively insignificant. The demand for flexibility in the organisation of work and employment patterns is in effect secured through the operation of the secondary labour market.¹⁰

¹⁰ The schismatic structuring of the labour market is industry and occupation related. However, it must also be acknowledged that some manufacturers and service providers who otherwise employ workers in accordance with formally negotiated industry standards have introduced some flexibility in employment practices by resorting to engaging some workers, and especially migrant workers, on cash terms to avoid industry rates of remuneration and social securing obligations.
The significance of ‘self-employment’ is one of the most striking features of the Greek political economy. This is testimony to the continuing importance of small-scale agricultural enterprise. The λαϊκι remain a notable feature of commercial life in Greece. This also reflects the significance of small enterprises in the tourist and hospitality industry, especially with family-owned tavernas, hotels and rooming houses, and more generally private modes of transport in taxis. Most of these small enterprises engage if only partially in cash transactions, and many have become reliance upon migrant workers to supplement the workforce.

It is also critical to note that the schismatic character of the labour market is highly gendered. Employment in core spheres of the economy has historically been dominated by men, a factor that is partially explicable in terms of the low participation rate of women in paid work, at least in the formal sphere of the economy. The increased participation of women in the labour market rate has been associated with women’s engagement in atypical work, and especially in the service sector and, with respect to their employment in public administration, on fixed-term contracts. The systems of clientelism and patronage clearly serve to inscribe gendered labour market disadvantage, and explain why women’s employment is concentrated in these less valued positions and why self-employment is a key ingredient defining women’s labour market participation. Underscoring this gendered labour market disadvantage is the continuing lack of acknowledgement of women’s ‘hidden employment’.

_Migrant workers and labour market precariousness_

The polarity in the Greek labour market has been accentuated by the arrival of immigrant workers. The lack of any meaningful state regulatory mechanisms to manage the flow of people, which has frustrated the granting of resident status and work permits, has meant that migrants have enjoyed almost no institutional protection in their quest to find gainful employment. Moreover, as new arrivals migrants also lack the knowledge regarding how the politico-economic and labour market structure operates and the networks that provide access to the formal labour market. It is for this reason that they are ushered into the informal labour market in its different manifestations. In the process, migration has underscored a labour market outcome that reinforces the informal economy.

Networks, though not as well-established and not as institutionally developed and more personally-based, do establish paths to employment, but they have tended to be restricted to opportunities within the ‘hidden economy’. These contacts do provide possibilities for migrant workers to screen potential

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11 Interestingly, this sphere of the economy is one of the products of the turnaround in the movement of people. Many of these enterprises were established by ‘guest workers’ who had worked in the factories of northern Europe, North America and Australia, or who had worked in shipping returning to Greece and investing their savings in the small family-owned businesses.

12 Notwithstanding Greek legislation in compliance with EU provisions and directives on equal employment opportunities for women, there is a fundamental and pervasive culture evident in the deep-seated institutional resistance to EEO measures which works to frustrate women’s disadvantaged position within the labour market (UN 1999).
employers, but choice of employer is often a luxury that the migrant worker can ill afford. The result is that many migrant workers in particular are employed on contracts that are contingent upon workers complying with the demands of the employer. With limited industrial rights there has been little scope for migrant workers to exercise much influence in negotiating the terms and conditions of their employment, and for undocumented workers very little scope to walk away from work in search of a more beneficient employer.

Self-employment has also emerged as an increasingly important vocation for migrant workers. In some respects, this reflects the marginalised position of migrants in the labour market, most obviously apparent in the Bangladeshi street hawkers; in other respects, it is the chosen vocation of others, such as with Sengelase and the Chinese street traders and the West African λαϊκ merchants. For others, self-employment provides a means of escaping the subordinate position of wage work for a Greek employer, as is the case with some domestic workers or some Eastern European immigrants who have established their own subcontracting businesses as painters, electricians and builders. It also has to be recognised that self-employment is an important manifestation of the settlement process becoming more secure.

In general, without work permits, undocumented workers have tended to experience a precarious employment and settlement existence. Their employment is more flexible and more seasonal in character, and migrant workers are more likely to be concentrated in the ‘hidden economy’. (One indication of how this is played is evident from estimates of the number of migrant workers employed in the agricultural and fishing industries indicated in Table 4. This estimate substantially miscalculates the extent of the reliance upon migrant workers.) Continuity of employment has depended largely upon how resolute the local police have been in checking documents and policing the law. (Until the first legislative initiative to legalise the position of migrant and immigrant workers initiated in 1998, responsibility for regulating undocumented migrants in Greece rested almost wholly with police.) To a lesser extent, the social insurance institution (IKA) and the labour department (OAED) could also call for checks on migrant workers because of the statutory requirement relating to employer and employee contributions to the state social insurance scheme, although they were inadequately resourced to undertake systematic inspections. In most instances, the policing and administration of migrant workers was generally at the discretion of authorities who by and large responded according to the sentiment of local communities or in line with the expressed wishes of employers (Psimmenos & Kassamati 2002: 4).

The policing of undocumented workers has varied considerably across the country, and the force of the law has varied through time. Severe labour shortages has meant that undocumented workers employed in the agricultural sector have generally not been challenged, although waves of xenophobia periodically seeping out from urban centres, and especially directed towards Albanian migrants, has...
meant that the workers’ position has not been assured. The policing of Albanians migrants in major urban centres has tended to be much more heavy handed. Attitudes to Eastern European migrant workers, and especially Polish and Bulgarian workers employed in semi-skilled and skilled occupations in the building and construction industry, have tended to be more liberal. However, in other areas problems with respect to skill recognition arise because of unfounded perceptions of the value of skills possessed by different nationalities remain (Markova & Sarris1997).

Migrant women workers form a relatively unique place within the Greek labour market. They are more likely than their male counterparts to be the sole employee. Female employment opportunities are concentrated in industries, most notably in the service sector, that are dominated by employers employing either one or relatively few workers. This is clear with respect to the concentration of women in domestic labour, as cleaners and carers, and in commercial cleaning (see Table 4). They are therefore more likely to be subject to the direct authority of the employer and more likely to be working in industries that have few set standards of employment and rates of remuneration. This intimacy in employment has both advantages and disadvantages. With employment a much more individualised and personal affair, migrant women generally tend not to be subject to the force of the law as their male counterparts. Thus, migrant women tend not to face the same level of policing and harassment that many migrant men are subject to, although this does vary according to ethnic origin. By the same token, employed in industries that generally do not have set standards in terms of conditions and rates of remuneration, or union representation, migrant women workers do not have the same level of legal recourse as their male counterparts, and legal action pursued to redress any wrongs or abuses tend to be subject to the personal whim of the authorities whom they approach. The consequence is that migrant women tend to face greater labour market vulnerability than their male counterparts and their employment experience vulnerable is likewise more vulnerable. One area of employment in which migrant women workers have suffered the effects of the lack of political will in enforcing regulations is sex work. To express this a little more frankly, a lack of integrity, either because authorities have failed to act, been bribed or are directly participating in prostitution and the trafficking of women, has meant that such workers have been placed in an extremely vulnerable position.

Another important facet of migrant women’s employment that is worth noting is that ethnicity also contributes to women’s status in the labour market and their employment experience. Employment

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13 This is probably because these individuals are paid less than locals performing similar tasks because migrant workers generally do not have their qualifications recognised (Interview: Spokesperson Europartners, November 2002). Recent joint initiatives by the EU and Greece are attempting to overcome this exploitation of individuals with valuable skills and qualifications through a media campaign that aims to promote recognition of skills and qualifications and thus ensure similar rates of pay with locals.

14 Legislation to specify trafficking in labour as a specific crime has only recently been passed, and this occurred only after a very sustained and well-publicised campaign.
conditions and rates of remuneration appear to vary according to the nationality of workers as has the
attitudes of policing authorities.  

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<th>Agric &amp; Mining&amp; Construction</th>
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Source: OECD (2001a: Table 5.4)

The failure to develop effective mechanisms for regulating the flow of people and regularising the
position of migrants in the labour market has had the effect of locking migrant workers into the
secondary labour market. A range of factors has contributed to this. It is the effect of the precarious
resident status of the overwhelming proportion of migrants resident in Greece. The clientelist relations
and systems of patronage have governed employment practices in the state as well as employment
practices in other large Greek enterprises (most particularly bank and insurance companies).
Professional employment opportunities, and especially in banking and insurance are similarly blocked.
Personal connections and networks also shape employment among small, independent enterprises,
including those located in the ‘hidden economy’.

The new regulatory regime: Towards the regularisation of migrant workers?

The arrival of migrant workers has contributed a further dimension to and deepened the schismatic
nature of the Greek labour market. The subordinate position of migrant workers, concentrated in less
secure and less rewarding positions right across the employment spectrum in professional, semi-skilled
and unskilled occupations, is a direct reflection of the failure of the political process to address the
challenge of the turnaround in migration. The earliest endeavours to meet the challenge, the
establishment of the regulative framework that followed the adoption of the Immigration Law of 1991,
highlighted the systemic shortcomings in the organisation and structure of the state.  

15 Ads by domestic workers generally indicate a preference for a preferred nationality and advertise
quite marked differentials in rates of remuneration depending on the workers’ ethnic origin.
16 The Immigration Law provided residence permits for migrants who had secured employment. Employment was
employer specific, and the permits issued were valid for one year and renewable for five years. The
arrangement was contingent upon the employer securing the approval of the state, through the OAED, and
permits issued went to EU citizen of ethnic Greeks. There was no provision made to assist social integration, as was the case with other states. The fact that the numerically significantly greater number of other ethnic groups who did not apply for resident permits, or had their applications rejected, meant that most migrants resident in Greece remained undocumented.

Over the course of the 1990s the limitations of this initial endeavour became more obvious. The number of resident permits remained steady while the immigrant population continued to expand dramatically. By the mid-1990s, Greece was forced to respond to European Union pressure to formulate a more meaningful legislative framework for regulating the migrant population. The corollary of the Schengen Accord, providing for the freeing up of border controls among the EU member states to provide for the free movement of European citizens, was the necessity to tighten the policing of the movement of non-citizens. For Greece, this meant more stringent policing of the entry of migrants into Greece as a corridor into Europe. There was also the incentive that whatever initiatives were adopted could attract European Union development funds, especially in the form of funds to support programs to facilitate the social inclusion of minority groups. Domestic pressures added to the momentum for legislative developments. Unions and emerging migrant worker organisations have lobbied for the adoption of laws that would provide some rights for migrants. Anti-migrant groups have petitioned for the exclusion of migrants, and especially Albanians, and more restrictive border controls.

To date, this new political momentum has generated three major pieces of legislation, the 1996 refugee legislation and the 1997 and 2001 migration bills. In each instance the heritage of the Greek polity has proved to have frustrated the challenge of developing and implementing effective and meaningful mechanisms to regulate the flow of people and regularise the position of migrants.

The 1996 legislation, designed to formalise the processing of asylum applications was a direct response to EU pressure. Until this legislation was enacted most refugees resided in Greece illegally. Yet, beyond the formality of the government sanctioning the status of refugee, there was no provision for supporting settlement in Greece. They were in effect left to their own resources, and given the institutional and social pressures noted above, this was little more than a recipe for labour market disadvantage. This was even more the case for those granted sanctuary under the designation of ‘humanitarian’. This category of protection was granted to those asylum seekers not granted refugee status, largely because their safety could not be assured should they be repatriated to their country of

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17 In recognition of this failure, the Greek government did negotiate a bilateral agreement with Albania with a view to regulating the deployment of Albanian workers in Greece, and particularly seasonal workers; but this had only minimal impact, and the police force remained the principal instrument for ‘regulating’ Albanian migrants. Greece negotiated a similar, and more effective, bilateral agreement with Bulgaria in 1995.

18 These are almost entirely political refugees recognised by the Greek state.
origin, and provided for limited-term residence which could subsequently extended. Vulnerability to the protective imprimatur of the states merely has exaggerated the precarious position of these refugees in the labour market.

However, it has been the migration legislation proper that has tested to the limit the state’s capacity to meaningfully regulate the position of migrant workers. The 1997 migration legislation charged the Ministry of the Interior and Public Order and the OAED as the responsible state authorities for overseeing the processing of applications for, and issuing of, residence and work permits. The regularisation process proved to be an administratively and procedurally cumbersome nightmare.

Undocumented migrant workers had to proceed through a two-stage process in which each entailed meeting multiple requirements. Application had to be made for a temporary resident permit, a ‘White Card’, and when this was sanctioned, application had to be made for a work permit, or ‘Green Card’, that would provide for the right to seek an extension of the resident permit, depending on the occupation and permit granted of 1, 3 or 5 years’ duration. The permits provided for equal employment and social security rights as nationals. Family reunion of dependents was restricted according to the class of permit granted but, in general, this was quite limited.

Applicants were required to provide several documents evidencing their residency, employment and health status and a police record clearance, which meant navigating several branches of the state. The capacity of the various offices of the different state authorities across the country to meet the requests was questionable and subject to abuse. There was no coordination across the different authorities; there was no provision for additional funding to provide for additional staff; and, there was no systematic instruction or training of existing Interior Ministry Public Order and OAED staff. Those charged with responsibility for processing applications were not familiarised with the new legislation19. Despite – or possibly because of – impossible deadlines for the submission of applications, applicants were subject to considerable delays and obstructions in securing relevant documents. The procedural requirements were extremely time consuming and costly; the documents provided did not always meet the requirements, and when they did the administrative capacity of the OAED to process the applications was called into question. As Psimmenos (2001) has elaborated, this meant that applicants were forced to rely upon the goodwill of public servants, and in a context where considerable discretion was exercised in the processing of applications, endorsement was subject to differential treatment according to ethnic criteria. Individual administrator’s perceptions of labour market requirements could be equally shaped by the patronage-clientelist-personal relationship networks.

19 A point clearly displayed in recent attempts to gain statistical data on the numbers of migrants processed at the OAED, including details on the country of origin, migration status, gender and skills and qualifications (Spokesperson OAED, November 2002, Athens)
One of the consequences of the inherent subjectivity of this process, according to Psimmenos, was that it opened up the scope for what is best described as a racially/ethnically-defined filtering of applications. This filtering influenced not only the endorsement or otherwise of the application, but also the occupational and industrial placement of the applicant. Thus, Pakistani and Bangladeshi migrant workers were sympathetically when applying for residence and work visas to work in the designated field of agriculture. Eastern Europeans have had little difficulty in securing permits when this related to employment in heavy industry. Similarly with respect to Albanians and Rumanians applying for permits to work in less-desirable occupations in the construction industry. Labour market segmentation has thus become characterised by a subordinate sphere that is structured along ethnic/racial lines. The ‘allocative process’ has varied across the country, reflecting different labour market needs and different clientelist relations, but it has remained structured along ethnic/racial lines in such a way to institutionalise its schismatic character.

The regularisation program was comparatively unsuccessful in sanctioning and regularising the position of immigrant workers. Of the estimated one million undocumented workers in Greece, only 200,000 applications for resident permits were lodged, and when the processing was finally completed in the year 2000, slightly less than 140,000 applicants were granted green cards. The result was that the great bulk of migrant workers remained undocumented and subject to the vagaries of police, bureaucrats and employers. The granting of residence and work permits did not improve this situation all that much because permits granted only limited security. Most residency permits issued were of limited duration, so the problem of regularisation was always presented an ongoing challenge.

The failure of the first regularisation program provided the impetus for a second regularisation program which commenced in 2001. This program, which has still not been concluded, has displayed many of the shortcomings of the first. There was considerable confusion within the bureaucracy as to the substance of the programme; it was interpreted in different ways by different departments, again lending to the exercise of discretion by those processing applications. The procedural steps for applying for permits required multiple documentation demands of applicants, and this served to highlight once again the problem of inadequate resourcing.

20 Interviews conducted with migrants being processed at OAED (Patissia, Athens November 2002), found that 80% of the migrants presenting at OAED (on Tuesdays and Thursdays when a construction representative was present) were from Rumania and Albania.

21 The legalisation process is poorly structured and is defined as highly bureaucratic, time consuming, confusing and difficult to achieve given the related requirements to gaining legal status. Furthermore, legal status is short term with permits issued for 1 - 2 years, resulting in the annual scramble for renewal and for participation in what is a time consuming bureaucratic task and the navigation of a number of state bureaucracies. The process is multi-tiered and involves the issuing of a work permit followed by a temporary residence permit. There are 8 requirements to gaining and renewing a work permit:

(i) A photocopy of the individual's work contract
(ii) A certificate issued by local tax office (DOY), stating that there are no outstanding tax debts.
(iii) Proof of insurance by public insurance foundation (IKAS)
(iv) A photocopy of valid health booklet (Πιληλικιαρυυγιαστι), the first 2 pages
(v) A written statement indicating place of residence
In the face of much-publicised backlogs in the processing of applications, deadlines were extended, procedures modified, qualifications made to requirements and residency entitlements. Further changes were made in light of continuing procedural and administrative failings, with responsibilities for processing being passed to municipal administrations. The transfer of applications for residency and work permits to municipalities has made the process an even more personalised one because the bureaucrats undertaking the processing are more likely to have closer links with actual or prospective employers opening up the scope for the exercise of individual discretion and determinations based on networks and patronage.

Furthermore, because the administrative changes added to the procedural hurdles and obstacles, they have generated more scope for corruption. The payment of money to facilitate administrative processing has become a feature of residence/work permit applications. It has been reported that ‘immigrant consultants’ have set up operations to facilitate the processing of residence and work permits (The Athens News 5 April 2002, 20 April 2002, 10 January 2003).

The 2001-2 regularisation program has been more successful in encouraging migrant workers to seek resident and work permits than previous efforts. However, the program has not been entirely successful in legalising and normalising the position of migrant workers in the Greek labour market. This is partly because of the shortcomings in procedural requirements. It is also partly a consequence of the fact that

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(i) A photocopy of work permit
(ii) A photocopy of work contract from your employer
(iii) A certificate issued by your local tax office stating you do not owe money in taxes
(iv) Proof you are insured by a public insurance foundation
(v) A photocopy of your health booklet valid for 2002
(vi) A photocopy of your passport
(vii) A photocopy of your temporary residence permit
(viii) A written statement indicating place of residence
(ix) A health certificate issued by a public hospital
(x) Receipt of payment of 150 euros at a tax office (this is the application fee)
(xi) 3 colour passport-sized photos

There are 11 steps to renewing and gaining a temporary residence permit:

One of the key requirements in gaining legal status in Greece is that individuals must have full time and stable employment in the formal labour market. But given the characteristics of the Greek labour market this is difficult to achieve.

22 In April 2002, it was estimated that, of the applications for residence and work permits lodged by December 2001, only 10,000 had been processed by April of 2002, with 150,000 still pending (Athens News 19 April 2002). Following the mid-year summer break, there were 130,000 Albanian workers were seeking to return to work who were held up at the Albanian-Greek border because of confusion over their status as a result of the extension of resident permits and because there were insufficient border staff to deal with the numbers re-entering Greece (Kathimerini 22 August 2002).

23 The deadline for submitting of applications was to be completed by the end of 2001. With well-publicised delays in departments meeting requests by migrants for relevant documentation, an extension in the deadline was granted to January 2002. It was then reset for 1 April, and then in April it was extended yet again until the end of the calendar year. In January 2003, the deadline for the completion of application processing was extended until June 2003. In each instance, there was a delay between the announcement of an extension and the gazetting of that by the Parliament, and all relevant authorities were not notified of the proposed extension with the result that many migrants were subject to unnecessary policing.
a large number of migrants are working in the informal sector and therefore unable to obtain the necessary documentation. These challenges are especially significant for migrant women workers. Overall, domestic workers employed as live-ins do not have the opportunity or the flexibility to queue in order to process their application even when they meet all the requirements. Many are, of course, employed on terms that enable employers to avoid taxation payments and social security obligations, and employers are resistant to the idea that they should provide evidence of their employee’s employment history. Others, and especially domestic cleaners engaged in ‘contracts of service’, do not have a single employer and therefore have difficulty meeting the documentation requirements. Many women working as domestic workers have entered Greece on tourist visas, and the securing of work through debt-bondage arrangements further restricts the ability of women to seek regularisation. A substantial proportion of migrant workers in Greece still do not possess formal work permits, so remain vulnerable to the vagaries of the labour market and institutional abuse. Those immigrant workers who have succeeded in obtaining work permits suffer the ignominy of having to work with the protection of permits that are of limited duration. They endure the prospect of having to confront the administrative apparatus of the state and all its inefficiencies and abuses, as well as the personal costs, because of the necessity to re-apply for permits. Sex workers are particularly vulnerable to the dependence that arises with debt-bondage employment contracts, and the involvement of police and/or border officials makes this even more of a problem.

The failure of the new immigration legislation reflects other systemic shortcomings in the state’s commitment to a regularisation program designed to improve the position of immigrant workers and remove obstacles to their employment. Various institutional obstacles confront migrant workers right across the employment spectrum. It is only recently that the government has advertised the fact that it is a statutory requirement that appointments in the public service be based on meritocratic principles. The failure to recognised qualifications obtained outside Greece, and to a lesser extent the European Union, remains a significant form of institutionalised racism.24 This is, of course, a matter of significance because there are next to no immigrant workers employed in the public service (see Table 4). It was not until mid-2002 that legislation was passed to ban advertisements that proscribed applications from ‘foreign workers’ Kathimerini 27 April 2002). Yet, the English-language newspapers continue to place advertisements that nominate the nationality of domestic workers being sought, with a premium paid to Filipina and Sri Lankan workers because of their command of English. More generally, it is evident that there is deep-seated resistance within the Greek state to the notion that immigrant workers will form an integral and increasingly important component of the labour force and

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24 This significance of attitudinal assessments driving a wedge into employment opportunities is quite marked. Interviews conducted with professional migrant organisations and different migrant groups highlighted the resistance of prospective Greek employers to acknowledge the skills and qualifications and prior employment experience of migrant workers. This was reiterated by an OAED spokesperson interviewed who noted that: “Migrants from Eastern Europe should not expect to get jobs in the upper areas of the labour market – their education and training is not of Greek standard nor is it like other countries such as immigrants trained in the US, Canada, some of the countries in the European Union…it will be very difficult when the EU is enlarged.”
a determined opposition to the possibility that legalised immigrants should have the right to compete for positions with Greeks.

There are other immediate systemic problems that are frustrating progress in the regularisation of migrant workers. The schismatic character of the labour market structure makes it difficult for immigrants to gain legal status. The ‘undocumented’ status of workers remains an important attribute defining employment opportunities. This will remain the case until there is a separation of labour market status in the formal economy from the process of approving residence and related civil and industrial entitlements. (Paradoxically, notwithstanding the reticence to define domestic labour as work, the growing demand for domestic workers has made it easier for some migrant women to secure term contracts of employment of reasonable duration.)

**Remaking the institutional order?**

Given the limited duration of resident and work permits set by the state, the challenges confronting efforts to regularise the position of migrant workers seem insurmountable. The administrative requirement for the renewal of permits every year or two will ensure that efforts to regulate the flow of migrant labour and regularise the position of workers will remain a labour intensive, time consuming and arduous process. The existing legislative approach is unwieldy and burdensome and will only serve to discourage applications to regularize migrant workers’ status. The repeated extensions of deadlines for applications and for finalising the processing of applications only serve to compound the likelihood that the regularisation program will at best be only partially successful in addressing the labour market problems.

This is a matter of real concern because it is evident that Greece’s reliance on migrant workers will not shrink. Demand for migrant labour remains buoyant, and in some occupational areas – most notably domestic workers and construction workers in the lead up to the Olympic Games – demand is continuing to grow. That being said, there is evidence of mounting pressure to overcome some of the institutional obstacles that place migrant workers in a precarious and vulnerable position in the labour market. Three pressures stand out.

Firstly, Greece’s membership of the European Union of the European Union has provided an important institutional impetus for effecting some progress in ameliorating the deleterious effects of labour market segmentation. EU directives, designed to promote equality of employment opportunity, to combat racism, and to provide greater transparency in employment procedures, have set in place new benchmarks that Greece is obliged to meet. These have brought some legislative developments and prompted some institutional changes. The most noteworthy has been the establishment of an Ombudman’s Office as a critical institutional conduit for progressing rights enshrined in the EU
European Union funding for social development which has been of considerable benefit to Greece also provides another source of institutional leverage. The EU funding has been the main source of finance for establishing programs to redress social exclusion.26 To date, however, such funding programs have been of limited benefit to non-Greek migrants. A vocational training program established on behalf of OAED, supported by EU funds, to promote labour market integration by and large only benefits ethnic Greeks (Athens News 1 March 2002; 5 April 2002). The deployment of EU-program funds has also been subject to some abuse.

There is some indication that the situation is changing. The EU has demanded more strident auditing requirements be met and this is introducing a new level of integrity into the management of the disposition of EU-funded programs. It is also evident that the European Commission is making a more concerted endeavour to ensure that the benefits of EU social development programs work to the advantage of other ethnic communities. For example, for the first time some real state-initiated support has been directed towards assisting the socio-economic integration of refugees. Through support from the EU Budget Line B3 – 4113 (pilot project) for the integration of refugees, a program has been established to promote opportunities for self-employment. A more ambitious four-year program has recently been announced to establish social integration of immigrants as a national priority. Partially funded by the European Union, the program envisages the establishment of information centres for Greeks and immigrants in order to fight xenophobia and racism; specialised counselling services that focus on assistance with health, welfare, education and employment; vocational training initiatives; and, the promotion of intercultural education (The Athens News 31 January 2003).

Greece’s succession to the presidency of the European Union has provided an additional impetus for the Greek government to more conscientiously address administrative and regulatory frameworks for managing the flow of people and the regularisation of immigrants. The Greek Prime Minister has publicly declared Greece’s commitment to taking the lead on the migration question.

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25 One noteworthy example was the ruling by the Supreme Court in favour of an undocumented worker claiming wages and holiday bonuses owed to him by his employer of eight years. The employer had sought to evade payment by claiming that the worker did not have any legal entitlements to the payments because he did not hold a valid work permit. (The ruling was based on a civil code of law rather than on labour law.) The Athens News 11 January 2002.

26 It does need to be noted, however, that most of the programs established in the past have concentrated on addressing problems experienced by repatriate ethnic Greek groups, and most notably the Pontian Greeks. Non-ethnic Greek communities have received comparatively little financial support through the EU’s Social Development Funds. The concentration of funds on repatriate ethnic Greeks is largely reflective of the prevailing ethnocentrism of the Greek state, and the endeavours of the government to consolidate a political support base among the repatriate ethnic Greek community.
International pressure is also exerting some influence on the institutional order. Quite independently of the Greek state, the International Organization for Migration has set up a trial vocational education and training centre as part of a job-matching programme with the object of combatting labour market barriers. Lobbying by the US State Department has more or less forced the Greek government to address the problem of trafficking in women.

Non-government organisations are contributing to efforts to redress the marginal position of migrants and refugees. The Refugee Council of Greece is in the process of setting up ‘cultural sensitisation’ workshops in schools and community centres in areas where there has been significant migrant settlement including Dafni, Aigalleo and Peristeri in Athens. The organised labour movement is developing a more resolute positive position with respect to defending the industrial rights of migrant workers and, more generally, supporting efforts that promote social integration. Building and construction unions, for instance, focused their energies on lobbying for improvements in occupational health and safety standards on projects associated with the Olympic Games, and many of these projects are reliant upon migrant workers. The Confederation of Greek Workers in Greece (GSEE) has provided considerable support for migrant worker organisations and encouraged their participation in industrial campaigns. The appointment of an officer specifically charged with advancing the interests of migrant workers has been an important step in extending the reach of union support.

Finally, and perhaps the most significant development has been the increasingly active role of migrant organisations in challenging existing institutional arrangements. There are those different ethnic groups that have organised with the object of providing support for members of their immigrant communities and for working towards progressing residency rights as well as industrial rights. Many of these groups have been quite vigorous in campaigning against institutionalised xenophobia and racism. Networking among these groups has also helped to promote their concerns and attract broader community support. The formation of the ‘Greek Forum of Migrants’ has also aided in shoring up the effectiveness of some of the community organisations.

Campaigns to improve the position of migrant workers who are concentrated predominantly in unskilled vocations has formed a key element in the focus of migrant groups. KASAPI, the leading Filipino organisation, has demonstrated considerable initiative in this project. Its efforts have also buoyed the organising efforts of other ethnic groups. 27

27 It is worth noting, however, that some ethnic groups have been slow to establish any meaningful community organisation to project that groups interests. The organisational strength of the Albanian Migrants Forum, for instance, has been quite uneven.
Perhaps one of the more interesting developments has been the emergence of migrant women’s organisations formed specifically to address the problems faced by immigrant women. Women involved in KASAPI were responsible for forming the Domestic Workers Union, with the support of the Confederation of Workers of Greece, which for has opened up possibilities for more public discussion around the working conditions and terms of employment of migrant workers engaged in domestic labour. By joining other women’s groups across Europe, through the RESPECT campaign which has received funding from the European Parliament, this endeavour has placed issues around the status of domestic labour firmly on political and industrial agendas (Debbie Valencia, KASAPI, Athens).

Another interesting development has been directed towards advancing the interests of migrant women who are engaged in professional vocations. The Foreign Women’s Network, based in Athens, has established an important focal point of support for professional women workers. TOWER, Thessaloniki Outlook on Women’s Employment Resources, is another such group.

What is particularly significant with the establishment of such groups is that they have been formed as a direct response to the sexual division of labour that presents migrant women with the twofold disadvantage: of being marginalised as women workers within a labour market that is intrinsically patriarchal, and as migrant workers confronting an institutionalised chauvinism that is coloured by ethnocentrism and xenophobia. This is manifest in the difficulties that skilled and professionally qualified women who have settled in Greece have in accessing appropriate employment opportunities. (Interviews: S. Nair, Athens; K Lukey-Coutsocostas TOWER, Thessaloniki).

The critical importance of the organisation of these migrant women groups is not just in identifying and campaigning against the institutionalised disadvantage faced by migrant women workers. These organisations have developed as alternative informal networks that work around the entrenched institutional barriers and provide other points of entry into the formal labour market. The work of women in KASAPI, through the Domestic Workers Union, has developed as a conduit for work opportunities and as agency that can filter employment conditions and employers. The objective was articulated quite precisely by the public relations and press officer of Tower (Thessaloniki Outlook on Women’s Employment Resources): “There is no familiar ‘old boys’ network to provide jobs or give advice about written and unwritten working procedures….this is what our network will provide for these women” (Lukey-Coutsocostas). Overall as pointed out by spokeswomen from both foreign women’s networks “…these women are forced to think laterally in order to be reintegrated into the Greek labour market. In most cases this involves either venturing into self-employment or using the networks built through our network…as we know the informal structure to recruitment and selection is very important in the Greek labour market. This is what our network aims to achieve”(S. Nair, Athens, FWN).
Support for migrant women workers by established Greek women’s organisations is also proving to be critical in countering the labour market disadvantage that many migrant women workers face. The support of such groups has been essential in progressing the formulation of laws to combat the trafficking of women. While these developments have not abolished the cultural and institutional foundations that have established the sector of sex work in Greece as one based on the employment of migrant workers, they have begun the process of challenging some of the institutional foundations that makes such work so precarious and unsafe.

Conclusion

The transformation of Greece from a country of emigration to a country of immigration cannot be understood without reflecting on the role and authority of the Greek state. Nor can this transformation be understood outside the context of the schismatic character of the labour market. Indeed labour migration, and most importantly undocumented migration, has become an integral element in underscoring the segmented structure of labour markets and, through the institutional rigidities that have frustrated the formulation and implementation of policy, have contributed to the ongoing lack of integrity in the functioning of the state.

Migrant workers are now of critical importance to the vitality of the Greek economy. Yet the economic advantage of this has been at some cost to most migrant workers because of the institutional obstacles placed in their way to secure security of residence and security in employment as well as equal access to employment opportunities as their Greek counterparts. Many of these obstacles are presently being challenged.

The Greek government is publicly committed to working towards the removal of institutional obstacles to employment of migrant workers in line with its responsibilities as a member state of the European Union. But it is not always clear if this expression of commitment is anything more than a rhetorical gesture designed to meet the conditions of EU development support or simply to placate Greece’s critics. There is also the issue of the extent to which declarations of commitment to the EU agenda to regularise the position of migrant workers and regulate the entry of migrants are simply another means of extracting more financial support from the EU. (The government has argued that it cannot meet the cost of the more stringent policing of people movement to secure its borders in line with EU policy without more EU funding support.) More interestingly, it is questionable whether there is the political let alone the institutional wherewithal and fortitude to effect changes in the organisation of the state that will diminish the force of clientelism and patronage. There is some change afoot, and certainly pressure emanating from the European Union for greater transparency in public administration, and the
concerns expressed by a number of international authorities with the extent of institutionalised corruption within the Greek polity, may force some change in this direction.28

The other side of this equation is that the more concerted efforts to regularise the position of migrant workers is occurring alongside the more strident endeavours to regulate and restrict the entry of clandestine migrants. Greece is devoting increased resources to the surveillance of coastal waters and has recently established a joint operational patrol plan, Triton, with Italy and Spain to police the Mediterranean coastline. (This has not been without some tensions with Italy criticising Greece for its failure to block the movement of refugees into Italy.) Turkey is being encouraged to participate in this initiative (Kathimerini 15 January 2003, 30 January 2003).29

There are also some worrying signs that institutionalised xenophobia is re-asserting itself. The clearest manifestation of this is the more stringent assessment of asylum applications. Very few applications for asylum are being granted in contrast with previous assessments. The government has also been more inclined to issue 'humanitarian visas' to asylum seekers which has the disadvantage of denying this group of refugees access to the state services that refugees can access.30 The more strident policing of coastal waters and of undocumented migrants in Greece is also coloured by a degree of ethnocentrism. It also has to be acknowledged that this is reflective of the tougher approach to refugees evident throughout the Europe Union.

Notwithstanding this evidence of institutional reaction, it is necessary to recognise that these reactions are ultimately not sustainable. The Greek economy is now more reliant upon the work of immigrants than ever before. It is obvious that the agricultural sector could not survive without the employment of migrant workers; tourism and hospitality is similarly reliant, and preparation for the Olympic Games has increased the reliance upon unskilled, semi-skilled and skill immigrant workers for construction. A growing middle class is now dependent upon the work of migrant domestic workers. More and more, migrants are regarded by different Greek communities and different industries as essential to the future viability of local economies and, in the case of domestic workers, indispensable if professional women are to entertain career ambitions. Our research indicates an increasing acceptance of the importance of migrant workers, and this possibly points to a breaking down in the popular foundations of institutionalised xenophobia in Greece.31 Economic imperatives are forcing changes in the organisation

28 The optimistic scenario being painted here must, however, be qualified by the Greek government’s more restrictive approach to the processing of refugee applications and the more strident approach to the repatriation of clandestine migrants entering Greece from Turkey.
29 The Greek government has continued to argue that effective patrol of coastal waters to enable Greece to comply with EU ambitions will necessitate greater financial assistance from the European Union.
30 The bilateral agreement signed between Greece and Turkey at the end of 2001, which obliges each state to return refugees, is another worrying sign of the retreat.
31 Research on rural communities has established strong support for migrant workers, and research undertaken in
and structure of the Greek political economy that are necessitating a rethinking of the place of migrants within the nation.

Much will depend upon the cultural and institutional transformations that are being demanded by migrant workers and their supporters. The industrial and political campaigns organised by migrant groups are now a regular feature of the political calendar in Greece. Moreover, many of these campaigns have been taken onto the European plain and this is providing another impetus to the efforts to progress migrant claims. The Europeanisation of the purview of migrant and refugee support groups has injected an added political edge to their endeavours. The institutions of the European Union which migrant groups are approaching afford alternative avenues for the pursuit of claims that might otherwise be resisted or rejected by the Greek state. Finally, it is important to recognise that the process of settlement, families living and organised in settled communities, provides other foundations for securing place within the Greek polity. Settlement helps to create the places within which to organise life and work outside the realm of established systems of clientelism and patronage. Building a life become less and less contingent upon securing a space in the schismatic Greek political economy.

Southern Greece (Peloponnese) in 2002 has reinforced these findings.

In the last 3 years there has been a steady influx of family migration from Africa. This form of migration is very different to that which has dominated in the past with migrants from Eastern Europe. The family unit puts a whole new spin on the need to settle and become integrated into the community (quickly). This group is distinctly tapping into the large area of self-employment in Athens. These communities are based in Athens. In Athens in the Patissia/Kypseli area there is an obvious presence of immigrants from the African community with African restaurants and bars. In addition to the ethno specific nature of business enterprise is the emergence of many convenience stores and phone/internet stores run by African families.
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European Profiles Equal I


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