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IMMIGRANTS IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Immigration constitutes an all time and multi-dimensional social phenomenon. There are quite a few people that in every time period seek a new place of residence and employment, in order to be able to survive or get a better life. The causes which lead to immigration are various and the immigration itself affects not only the immigrants but also the countries of departure and arrival. The immigration phenomenon has occupied and continues to occupy the majority of countries, among which is Greece which has been one of the new host countries for immigrants. The moving of the population presents when the social and economic environment in which an individual lives and moves, does not provide him with the capability to fulfill his pursuits and satisfy his ambitions. The most frequent reason of immigration nowadays is the economic factor and the objective of the individual that immigrates is finding work. In the present project we will study unemployment and employment in the host countries and more specifically in Greece. In Greece during the last years there appears to be an intense influx of immigrants converting it from a departure country to a host country for immigrants. What happens with the working conditions and insurance, how does immigration affect the unemployment of the permanent population, in what kind of jobs are immigrants occupied and do age and sex play a role in finding work? These are some of the questions we are called to answer through this project. The project not only will deal with how immigration affects the working market but also the economy in general (Cholezas and Tsakloglou, 2008). The research part of the project is based on the Greek and European Statistics Service. The statistical data are presented in the form of charts and diagrams. The data actually concern the legal immigrants in the area of Greece and countries of the E.U. (Vgenopoulos, 1988).

Keywords: Foreigners – Immigrants, Employment, Working Environment, Unemployment

1. General Unemployment in Greece and in Europe

According to Post-Keynes economists, the aim of the society should be minimization of unemployment regardless of the inflation. According to the European Statistics Service in the second trimester of 2012, unemployment in Greece reaches %21.7 while in the rest of Europe (27 countries) it reaches 10.2%. The percentage of women living in Greece at the same period is 25.7% and men is 18.8%, the equivalent percentages in Europe are 10.3% and 10.1% (Cholezas and Tsakloglou, 2008).

The lowest unemployment rate in Europe is in Norway and it is characteristic that the unemployment rate of females is lower than the equivalent rate of men. As far as the rest of the world is concerned the USA have reduced unemployment from 9% in 2011 to 8.3% in the second trimester of 2012. Japan has relatively low unemployment rate compared to Europe, keeping unemployment close to 4%, without major fluctuations from 2009.

2. Finding Work as the Basic Reason for Immigration

From the 761,813 immigrants stating as country of residence Greece in March 2001, 381,330 said that they settled down in our country with one and only reason to find work and 413,201 were the people who settled down here for two reasons one of which was finding work. The majority of the immigrants came from neighboring countries, a percentage of 58.25% of the immigrants came from Albania, some from countries from the east and some from Africa. Less than 1% of the immigrants came from America (Cholezas and Tsakloglou, 2008). 169,290 are the people who stated that one of the reasons they came to Greece was finding work and they stayed in Greece more than 5 years in 2001 while 50,588 moved in our country that same year. 40.8% of the immigrants who left their country to claim an employment position in Greece were women of which 120,886 made it possible. The number of male immigrants who were occupied in 2001 were 270,511 people¹. In Table 1, the reasons for which the immigrants stated why they chose Greece for their stay, are listed.

Table 1. Immigrants and reasons for settlement in Greece

CAUSES	FOREIGNERS
EMPLOYMENT	381,330
FAMILY REUNION	93,674
STUDIES	19,950
SEEKING ASYLUM	9,920
REFUGEE	2,359
OTHER REASON	206,784
MIXED REASON	47,796
TOTAL	761,813

The number of immigrants coming to Greece so that they will not be living away from their families is quite large. Only a 2.6% have stated that they came to study, less than 1.7% because they are refugees seeking asylum while the 27% approximately for none of the above reasons². As we have already seen one of the reasons of their settlement is family reunion. The fact that 55% of the immigrants coming to Greece to find work are married justifies the percentage of the immigrants coming to the country to reunite with their family. 35% did not have a family when they came to our country to find work which has made their decision to leave their country to find work in another country easier.

3. Unemployment of Immigrants in Greece

With such a high percentage of unemployment it is expected that the number of unemployed immigrants will be equally high. The total of the unemployed foreigners in Greece in the census of 2001 in Greece reached 40,340, when the total of the economically active was 431,737 people. The men stated as active reached the number of 294,375 of whom 270,511 were occupied, so the percentage of the unemployed was 8.1%. As far as women are concerned, 16,476 stated as economically active.

After all, let us not forget that the unemployed immigrants are many more since the census involves the legal population (Vgenopoulo, 1988). In Table 2, the economically active population is presented, the unemployed in total and according to their sex in every prefecture

¹ Please see <<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>> [Accessed 7 May 2013].

² Please see <<http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE>> [Accessed 4 May 2013].

of Greece based on the census of 2001 which was issued by the Greek statistical service³. In rural areas the unemployed are a few (Table 2), for example in the prefecture of Evrytania there are only 22 people without work. This is happening because the immigrants who chose to stay in rural areas are a lot less than the ones who chose to stay in urban areas and moreover in rural areas it is easier to find work in agricultural activities. Furthermore the population of the local residents in rural areas is reduced, at least before the crisis, therefore working positions in agriculture become available. We can say that immigrants contribute in the preservation and development of rural areas⁴.

Table 2. Unemployed population of foreigners per sex and prefecture

Prefectures	Unemployed	Economically Active Population	Unemployed	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
				Economically Active Population	Unemployed	Economically Active Population
AITOLIA-ACARNANIA	345	4,135	251	3,241	94	894
ARGOLIS	375	5,837	215	4,165	160	1,672
ARCADIA	175	2,199	111	1,568	64	631
ARTA	125	1,229	91	936	34	293
ATTICA	17,394	208,424	10,487	137,255	6,907	71,169
ACHAEA	1,404	8,673	1,048	6,403	356	2,270
BOEOTIA	546	8,648	404	7,234	142	1,414
GREVENA	108	516	78	411	30	105
DRAMA	269	1,339	162	930	107	409
DODECANESE	1,669	9,057	844	5,382	825	3,675
EVROS	99	8,39	49	519	50	320
EUBOEA	468	6,290	280	4,872	188	1,418
EVRYTANIA	22	2,95	15	241	7	54
ZAKYNTHOS	512	2,839	228	1,921	284	918
ELIS	934	6,696	610	4,712	324	1,984
IMATHIA	246	2,758	133	1,960	113	798
HERAKLION	981	9,005	501	5,774	480	3,231
THESPROTIA	117	1,327	62	955	55	372
THESSALONIKI	3,918	35,902	2,225	23,350	1,693	12,552
IOANNINA	411	3,395	247	2,540	164	855
KAVALA	457	4,085	245	2,815	212	1,270
KARDITSA	188	1,551	127	1,149	61	402
KASTORIA	220	1,131	135	815	85	316
CORFU	601	4,564	291	2,904	310	1,660
KEFALONIA	169	1,712	79	1,207	90	505
KILKIS	245	1,719	150	1,269	95	450
KOZANI	292	1,832	215	1,438	77	394
CORINTHIA	554	7,877	330	5,661	224	2,216
CYCLADES	709	6,393	286	4,450	423	1,943
LACONIA	331	5,527	232	3,749	99	1,778
LARISSA	521	7,693	310	5,961	211	1,732
LASITHI	367	4,344	172	2,624	195	1,720
LESBOS	218	3,117	130	2,244	88	873
LEFKADA	72	790	39	535	33	255
MAGNESIA	511	6,977	275	5,109	236	1,868
MESSENIA	599	8,109	361	5,463	238	2,646

³ Please see <<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home>> [Accessed 7 May 2013].

⁴ Please see <<http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE>> [Accessed 4 May 2013].

Table 2. Continued

XANTHI	136	801	73	518	63	283
PELLA	357	4,235	236	3,197	121	1,038
PIERIA	320	3,432	182	2,294	138	1,138
PREVEZA	206	1,809	130	1,291	76	518
RETHYMNO	335	4,024	159	2,817	176	1,207
RHODOPE	98	600	55	361	43	239
SAMOS	100	1,151	45	772	55	379
SERRES	337	2,100	227	1,507	110	593
TRIKALA	133	1,823	80	1,363	53	460
PHTHIOTIS	646	8,839	454	6,942	192	1,897
FLORINA	128	1,189	91	914	37	275
PHOCIS	115	1,375	79	1,060	36	315
CHALKIDIKI	419	4,660	246	3,611	173	1,049
CHANIA	744	7,818	332	5,257	412	2,561
CHIOS	94	1,057	57	709	37	348
TOTAL	40,340	431,737	23,864	294,375	16,476	137,362

As expected most immigrants are in the capital, the ratio of the unemployed immigrants living in the prefecture of Attica compared to the economically active immigrants is 8.3%. The prefecture with the lowest unemployment rate is the prefecture of Boeotia with 6.3% while the one with the highest is the prefecture of Grevena with 20.93%⁵. It is obvious that more than a quarter of the unemployed population is in the prefecture of Attica. So let us focus for a while in the region of Attica since there, there is the largest gathering of immigrants. In the following table, the districts of east and west Attica as well as the district of Piraeus are presented analytically⁶.

Table 3. Unemployed population of foreigners per sex, Attica

District	TOTAL			MALES			FEMALES		
	Economically		Unemployed	Economically		Unemployed	Economically		Unemployed
	Active	Inactive		Active	Inactive		Active	Inactive	
ATHENS	155,396	91,775	12,483	97,834	28,617	7,397	57,562	63,158	5,086
EAST ATTICA	24,146	13,365	1,805	18,236	4,230	1,180	5,910	9,135	625
WEST ATTICA	6,824	3,751	608	5,446	1,025	400	1,378	2,726	208
PIRAEUS	22,058	14,283	2,498	15,739	4,372	1,510	6,319	9,911	988
TOTAL	208,424	123,174	17,394	137,255	38,244	10,487	71,169	8,493	6,907

Looking at Table 3, we notice that the economically active women are less than the ones who are not, they are 13,761. What is also impressive is the fact that in west Attica the inactive women are only 208 and the men only 400, a relative small number compared to the district of Athens⁷.

⁵ Please see <<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>> [Accessed 7 May 2013].

⁶ Please see <<http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE>> [Accessed 4 May 2013].

⁷ Please see <<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>> [Accessed 7 May 2013].

4. Labor Force in Greece

Now let us look at Table 4 from the European Statistics Service in which the labor force according to nationality is presented. It is divided into three categories, Greek nationality, European nationality and nationality of other countries⁸.

SURVEY: Labor force (sex, region, age group, nationality, education, profession, economic activity, professional position, occupation)

SURVEY DESCRIPTION: Date of update: 14/01/2011

VARIABLES: Members, report period > code number, description, nationality >

VARIABLES AXES: Code number, description

Table 4. LABOR FORCE ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY

Nationality	Greek	European Union Countries	Other Countries
Report Period			
200503, A trimester 2005	10,091,330	57,865	493,367
200506, B trimester 2005	10,093,555	61,977	495,941
200509, C trimester 2005	10,101,351	59,533	501,554
200512, D trimester 2005	10,119,430	56,455	496,605
200603, A trimester 2006	10,150,544	43,464	494,208
200606, B trimester 2006	10,622,606	56,111	483,943
200609, C trimester 2006	10,155,968	58,211	502,784
200612, D trimester 2006	10,161,770	57,880	512,689
200703, A trimester 2007	10,164,294	54,387	524,715
200706, B trimester 2007	10,173,111	55,839	524,875
200709, C trimester 2007	10,132,656	113,517	511,925
200712, D trimester 2007	10,119,366	116,109	526,957
200803, A trimester 2008	10,125,389	115,601	527,764
200806, B trimester 2008	10,095,553	121,617	558,948
200809, C trimester 2008	10,091,657	129,180	562,908
200812, D trimester 2008	10,058,012	133,859	599,739
200903, A trimester 2009	10,048,082	135,075	638,231
200906, B trimester 2009	10,027,508	139,261	665,956
200909, C trimester 2009	10,000,389	146,818	697,075
200912, D trimester 2009	10,016,317	142,606	697,098
201003, A trimester 2010	10,033,037	139,190	693,758
201006, B trimester 2010	10,060,752	135,613	680,269
201009, C trimester 2010	10,071,858	135,521	680,077

5. Working Position of Immigrants

Unfortunately from the number of the unemployed immigrants we cannot conclude anything concerning the quality of life of foreigners in Greece. What is also important to examine is the kind of employment the immigrants have in our country. Before we examine in which section of economic activity the foreign residents of this country are occupied, let us take a look at their education. From the 761,813 who were entered into the census returns in 2011 most of them were graduates of secondary education, a percentage of 26.3%. The people having a PhD or a Master degree were 1,436 and 3,332 respectively. 16.8% were graduates of high school and 31.9% of primary school⁹. In a country like Greece where unemployment is approaching 22% the residents seek any kind of employment. Actually the demands for a working position are low so the qualifications of the people applying for this position are higher than what the position requires. According to the Greek Statistics Service most immigrants living in Greece in 2001

⁸ Please see <<http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE>> [Accessed 4 May 2013].

⁹ Please see <<http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE>> [Accessed 4 May 2013].

were occupied in constructions. The fields of quarries, mines as well as water and natural gas services did not occupy many immigrants. The fact that the immigrants did not hold many working positions in the previous fields is not justified by the lack of special skills concerning these positions but from the fact that Greece does not have rich mines and does not occupy in general many people in these positions. A lot of immigrants were also occupied during the last census in manufacturing, agriculture and commerce. Generally we can say that the majority of the working immigrants occupied in the country have unskilled or manual labor working positions (Vgenopoulos, 1988). Therefore, we could contradict the stereotype that immigrants get the working positions of the natives since the numbers show that they only cover the vacancies in the working positions¹⁰. There appears to be an intense professional variation of immigrants not only per sex but also per nationality. Among the men of different nationalities we can observe for starters, a large fluctuation as far as the occupations of construction and structural work are concerned. As it has been pointed out this category is the most important among men occupying 44% of them. Immigrants from Romania appear to have the highest percentage of occupation in these professions (67%), while they are followed by immigrants from Poland, Albania and Ukraine who are occupied in construction in percentages of 56%, 51% and 50% respectively, contrary to the men coming from countries of Asia and Africa, who according to the conclusions of the research have little participation in construction (Karidis, 2011). In relation to men, in women we can observe a much smaller variation as far as nationality is concerned. According to the research this happens because the majority of every nationality in women is occupied in professions of personal services and cleaning. The percentage of women lying in this professional group ranges from 96% for the women coming from the Philippines, up to 71% for those coming from Romania. Therefore, concerning the professional occupation of men, there is a variation among the ones coming from the countries of Asia, while this does not apply to the women. Whichever is their country of origin, the usual thing is to be occupied in a profession which includes traditionally women's jobs, like cleaning and taking care of elderly people and generally dependent people.

6. Repercussions of Immigration in the Working Market

Generally a large influx of immigrants into a country can have repercussions on many aspects of the economy, like the gross national product, the size of the economies, the salaries, employment and unemployment, the distribution of income, etc. Studies have shown that in Greece also there are relative repercussions on the economy because of immigration (Karidis, 2001). The coming of unskilled workers will transform the level of specialization of the labor force and as a result it will affect the balance in the working market. According to most authors globally the view, that immigrants affect the salaries of the natives with low education who belong to the unskilled labor force, prevails. Another conclusion is that there is generally little or no effect at all on the unemployment percentages or on the general occupation of the natives. In short term, there are studies which show increase in unemployment and duration in so. In the long term however, it appears that immigrants create more working positions than the ones they occupy resulting in the decline of unemployment in time. Generally immigration has little impact on the economy of the host country and it appears that the economies can absorb immigration without deteriorating the natives' position. Naturally in any case there are specific sub-groups of natives who are affected more from immigration. In Greece there are not many authors dealing with immigration and the working market because the lack of data and the fact that the phenomenon of immigration has grown in the last few years, have limited research. The results of certain research, as we have previously seen, show that there is a high degree of substitution of natives and immigrants in the agricultural section. The immigrants gather in jobs which Greeks do not choose and the salaries and productivity of immigrants are lower. According to data collected from the last published census in Greece it seems that immigrants are included mainly in the categories of production workers and unskilled workers. We can also observe that

¹⁰ Please see <<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>> [Accessed 7 May 2013].

evaluating the possibility of an immigrant choosing a profession is substantially different from the possibility of a Greek choosing the profession. This shows us that the working market in Greece treats natives and immigrants differently. Also the choice of profession from immigrants is not random. There are specific professions immigrants tend to follow more frequently. The jobs immigrants usually do are manual and below their educational level and skills. Studies have shown that there is an important contribution of immigrants to the gross national product. The salaries of immigrants are lower in comparison to the natives of equivalent educational level. Looking at the data one could assume that there is exploitation of immigrants from their Greek employers. The views concerning whether there is substitution or not between natives and immigrants, are divergent. One aspect which has already been mentioned is that there is no substitution since immigrants work in positions rejected by Greeks. On the other hand there are those who support that immigrants are occupied mainly in construction and manual labor where unskilled workers are needed so they may substitute natives (Vgenopoulos, 1988). It is a very important fact that immigrants have contributed to the increase of the gross national product while illegal immigrants do not seem to burden services or day care schools or have remarkable influence on the housing market. Another also interesting repercussion is that there is a positive and statistically important relation between immigration and per capita income. That is, immigrants can increase the per capita production in a region. Moreover immigrants not only contribute through their work to the per capita income but also through consumption, housing rent and for the legal immigrants even through taxation (Karidis, 2001). Another study for Greece examines the characteristics of immigrants and the way of choice of region. The conclusions of the present research show that the choice of region depends on whether they are illegal or not immigrants, or from the unemployment levels in the certain areas. This may happen because the immigrants accept to work with such low salaries so that they can find employment. A conclusion drawn concerning the population of the unemployed immigrants per prefecture is that the degree of urbanization is a very strong factor in the choice of residence for immigrants. For the male immigrants though, an important factor is also the existence of the rural section. This may be owed to the educational levels and the skills of the male immigrants in relation to those of the females (Glytsos and Nicholas, 2005)

7. Conclusion

The aim of the project was to present the height of the unemployment of immigrants in Greece, their working positions and the repercussions of immigration on the working market. The prevailing aspect of most researchers is that there are not important repercussions on the working markets of the host countries, as it happens with Greece the economies seem to be able to absorb immigration without causing any problems to the natives. In Greece immigration comes in a high percentage from the region of the Balkans and immigrants are mainly unskilled workers with low education (Karidis, 2001).

For our analysis for Greece, we used data from the Greek Statistics Service and the European Statistics Service. Our sample included data concerning the economic dimensions of Greece from the census of 2001 and contain information about the offered employment, unemployment, educational levels and occupation (Cholezas and Tsakloglou, 2008). Unemployment of immigration in 2001 was quite high. The unemployed male foreigners were occupied in manual labor, mainly if they came from the Balkans. Women regardless of their country of origin were mainly occupied in women's jobs. Furthermore the salaries of the immigrants were and are on average lower than the natives. Unfortunately like research shows most immigrants hold working positions that require less than their educational level. In conclusion, we could contradict the stereotype that wants foreigners increasing the unemployment levels, since as research shows there is no substitution between natives and immigrants. Furthermore their participation in the increase of the gross natural product and in the development of the rural regions is quite important (Cholezas and Tsakloglou, 2008).

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