

Crisis and the resurgence of emigration from Greece: trends, representations, and the multiplicity of migrant trajectories¹

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Abstract

In the context and conjuncture of the crisis affecting the Eurozone as whole, yet shaking mostly its "weakest links", rising unemployment and steep decreases in salaries and welfare allowances are cited as push factors contributing to what is seen as the emergence of a new emigration wave from Southern Europe. This is especially true for Greece, the country which has been hit hardest by the crisis, recession and austerity, and their social and political consequences. In Greece, there is extended media coverage of this new emigration, which is presented as an one-way option for certain population segments, notably the young and the highly skilled, and hence a drain of the most dynamic part of the country's labour force. Despite this media attention, however, little is known about the current intensification of emigration from Greece and its characteristics, as well as the experiences of the country's new "crisis migrants".

This paper aims to partly fill in this gap. It begins by sketching the broad picture and identifying key trends, before moving on to explore key issues in the emerging public discourse. It then zooms into the case of recent Greek migrants to the Netherlands, providing a typology of different mobility trajectories and migration experiences. Through this, we intend to deconstruct a number of conventional assumptions. Firstly, by situating new Greek emigration in a historical continuum, whereby its structural preconditions predated the crisis. Secondly, by identifying the qualitative dimensions of rupture through which the intra-EU mobility from Greece has undergone a shift from a career choice to one largely motivated by necessity. Finally, by highlighting those aspects that problematize idealistic perceptions of life

¹ The chapter partly draws from research conducted by the first author for the EUMIGRE project, funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 658694.

and work “in Europe” often depicted in Greek media, we bring to the fore the ambivalence of mobility decisions and the multiplicity of individual pathways.

Key-words

Emigration; intra-EU mobility; Greece; crisis; migrant trajectories.

Introduction

In post-war decades Greece emerged as an emigration country and a net exporter of labour (Fakiolas/King 1996). By the mid-1970s, net migration rates had turned positive primarily due to the return of former Greek emigrants, especially from European destinations such as (West) Germany. It is around the same period when recruitment of foreign labour was first registered; from the 1980s Greece also began to attract (limited numbers of) refugees and international students, and, by the early 1990s, the country became a de facto destination for international migrants. This turnaround coincided with similar pathways of other southern European countries (King 2000). Since then, immigration has become a crucial factor of societal change, largely monopolising public debates and academic research.

In the meanwhile, emigration had in fact never ceased as such, but remained insignificant as compared to the inflows. A renewed public discussion has recently appeared, in which rising unemployment and cuts in salaries and allowances, in the context of debt crisis, recession, austerity and their socio-political consequences, are cited as push factors contributing to the emergence of a new emigration wave. At an early phase, this discussion has largely been shaped by a study of Greek professionals leaving in search of better career opportunities abroad – a trend which has always been in place, but became more prominent since the 1990s and intensified with the crisis (Labrianidis 2011; 2014). Outmigration receives increasing media attention, and is presented as an one-way option for the young and the highly skilled, and hence a drain of the most dynamic part of the country’s labour force.

Despite growing media coverage, however, still little is known about the current intensification of emigration and its qualitative dimensions. Moreover, increasingly politicised media discourses tend to overlook certain issues while others remain silenced. Not only the pre-existing structural conditions tend to be forgotten, but also the diversification of emigration flows is often ignored. A major shift that is underway concerns the transition from

emigration as a career choice to a pathway imposed by need. As such, it may affect primarily the young and highly skilled, but spans to include other population segments: migrants, minorities, people of older age and lower educational attainments. As ever, “objective” structural factors (“the crisis”, etc.) are refined into a multiplicity of subjective motivations, trajectories and experiences in destination places. Depending on conditions there and prospects at home, as well as on the individuals’ or households’ circumstances and plans, mobility pathways can be temporary or ambivalent.

Aiming to partly fill in such gaps and to account for neglected aspects, this chapter focuses on the resurgence of Greek emigration at times of crisis by combining two different angles: the view from the sending country, and that at the destination. It is divided in two broad sections, each drawing on a variety of sources. In the first section, we overview the evidence deriving from official statistics and academic studies on the topic in order to sketch the broad picture of (what we know about) current emigration trends. We then explore media debates so as to highlight key points in the emerging public discourse, based on a review of 60 original newspaper items published between 2010-15. In the second section, we zoom into one of the emerging destinations, the Netherlands. Building on qualitative research conducted in the context of two research projects and on survey material deriving from engagement with a Greek community organization², we provide a typology of Greek “crisis” migration to this country. The chapter closes with a concluding section, in which we revisit key findings and summarise our arguments.

The resurgence of emigration from Greece

² Most of the qualitative data presented in the second section were collected as part of Pratsinakis’ aforementioned EUMIGRE project. The chapter also builds on additional material from the recently completed project “Outward Migration from Greece during the Crisis” (2015-16), funded by the National Bank of Greece through the London School of Economics’ Hellenic Observatory (Research Tender 3-NBG3-2014; see Labrianidis/Pratsinakis 2016). The Netherlands survey was conducted during 2013-14 by Grammatikas through his involvement in the Greek community organization “Neoafithendes” providing information and support to newcomers in The Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, in which Pratsinakis also volunteered. The first section draws on collective work and on Hatziprokopiou’s review of media articles.

Even if the establishment of the right to free movement, employment and settlement across the European Union (EU) for Greek citizens in the 1980s allowed for unrestricted mobility, this never took the form of mass outflows. Until recently, Greeks were notably registered among the least mobile Europeans. A 2005 Eurobarometer survey unveiled that Greeks (second after the Cypriots) were the least favourable towards long distance mobility (European Commission 2006). Another Eurobarometer, conducted in 2009, showed that only eight per cent of Greeks envisaged working abroad (the lowest after Italians), while the share of those who would consider working in some other country in case of unemployment was well below the EU average (European Commission 2010). This was soon due to change in the shadow of the crisis.

In this section we overview existing evidence on new emigration and explore aspects of the emerging media discourse. The former relies on relevant academic studies and official data, evincing key figures and trends. The latter draws from a collection of nearly 100 newspaper (online and print) articles directly or indirectly accounting for the issue of outmigration from Greece, published between 2010-2015. These were identified during two main rounds of systematic Internet searches: one out of five during December 2013 – January 2014, and most of the remainder during December 2015 – January 2016. Of these, we have selected 60 original items, which we reviewed with the aim to explore media discourses on new emigration from Greece³.

Emigration trends

Albeit limited, emigration in the recent past was more frequent among specific groups: emigrants of the post-war waves and their offspring moving between Greece and European destinations (Fakiolas/King 1996), Muslims from the minority of Thrace spending spells of employment in Germany or Turkey (Pratsinakis 2002), as well as increased number of students abroad (Karamesini 2010). Above all, there has been a continuous outflow of professionals that started becoming prominent in the 1990s, increasingly to Europe (Labrianidis 2011). Yet, highly skilled migration was largely a matter of choice for the middle and upper social classes; most emigrants left the country for reasons beyond employment as

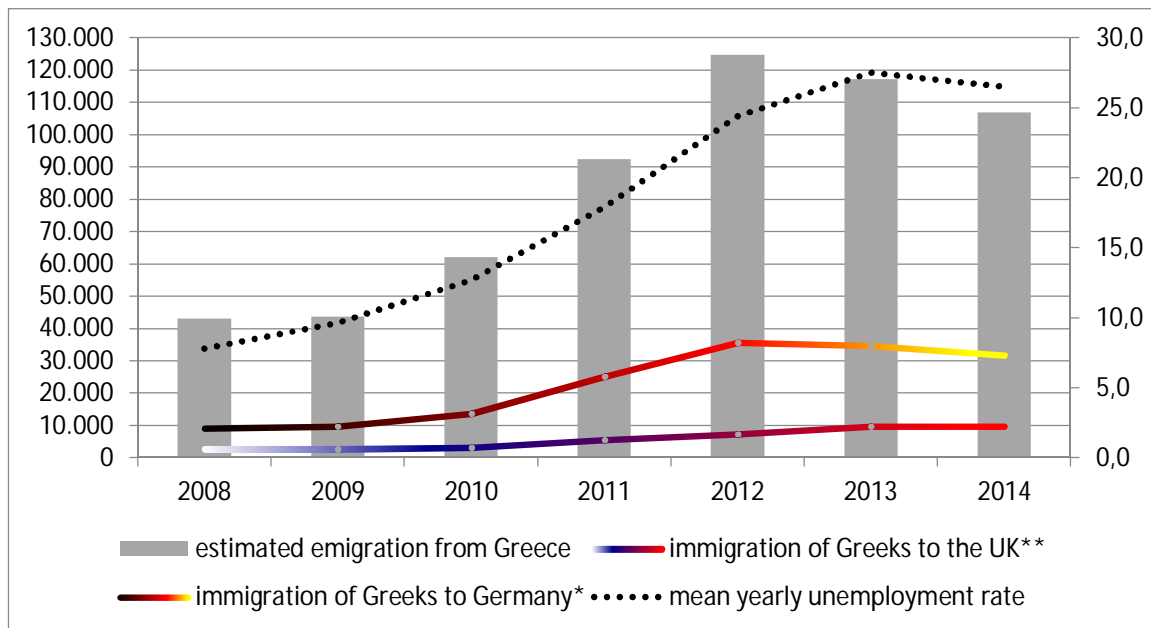
³ We searched on Google, rather than excavating into specific media; and – for the analysis hereby presented – we have limited ourselves to national and general news media, rather than local or specialised ones, and tried to maintain some balance between original articles and news duplicated in several media.

such, subjectively justifying their choice as an “escape” from a parochial Greek society, and as a desire to explore the world and live as cosmopolitans (Labrianidis 2011, 196-7).

Labrianidis’ (2011) pioneering study, based on an online survey conducted in 2009-10 that generated a sample of 1821 individuals and plenty of qualitative information, revealed the reality of “brain drain” as a trend predating the crisis, attributed not to the “over-education” of the young (against conventional earlier assumptions), but rather to structural malfunctions of the Greek productive model of the past decades, partly a (domestic) reason for the crisis. Accordingly, the inability of the labour market to absorb graduates has been primarily due to the private’s sector failure to invest in high added-value products and services and expand knowledge-intensive sectors requiring highly skilled personnel (Labrianidis 2011; 2014). The crisis seems to intensify such trends, as job opportunities shrink and public sector employment is not a possibility anymore as a result of restrictions in new recruitments (*ibid.*; Pelliccia 2013; Triandafyllidou/Gropas 2014).

Yet the crisis undermines the employment prospects not only for graduates, but for the entire workforce. To give just an obvious example: the annual average unemployment rate in 2015 was nearly 25 per cent, almost double that of 2010 and more than triple than in 2008 (Figure 1); in the last quarter of 2015, nearly half of young people aged 20-24 were unemployed, and over 37 per cent of those 25-29 years old. In a context of GDP contraction of more than one quarter between 2008-14, the same period has also seen steep decreases in earnings and welfare provisions and allowances. The combined effects of recession, extreme austerity, and a generalised mistrust towards institutions and disillusionment from the political system have changed drastically mobility intentions. Despite the previously recorded scepticism, many were forced by the circumstances to change their views on mobility in a very short time span.

Figure 1. *Emigration and unemployment rates, 2008-2014*



Sources: Hellenic Statistical Authority, Population and social conditions, Demography: Migration flows (2008-14), <http://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SPO15/->; Labour Market: Employment-Unemployment (Timeseries) <http://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SJO01/->; *. Germany: DESTATIS, Bevölkerung; Wanderungen: <https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online>; ** UK: Department for Work & Pensions, database: NINo registrations: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>.

Even if actual emigration is not systematically recorded as such, official data evince that there are already many who have taken that step. Figure 1 illustrates estimated numbers of emigrants, released annually by the Greek Statistical Authority since 2008. Accordingly, over half a million people left Greece in the period 2010-2014: emigration rates surged after 2009, peaked in 2012 and since then appear to decline, yet the numbers leaving annually now well exceed 100,000. Unpacking the composition of the outflows and the emigrants' destinations, however, is a complex matter in many respects.

First and foremost, significant shares of those leaving are foreign nationals⁴. Albanians, for example, who constitute the majority of Greece's immigrants and are severely affected by rising unemployment, may take advantage of proximity and (since 2011) visa-free travel in the EU to return, temporarily at least, perhaps before seeking work elsewhere while

⁴ When we first drafted this chapter and at least until April 2016, the Hellenic Statistical Authority's emigration estimations were also available on the EUROSTAT database for the years 2008-13 (Population and social conditions: Emigration by sex, age group and citizenship, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_emi_lctz&lang=en), including breakdown by citizenship. Accordingly, during 2008-10 over half of emigrants were foreign nationals, while during 2011-13 Greek nationals form more than 50 per cent of those estimated to leave. At the time of revising the chapter (June 2016), this data was not any more available on the EUROSTAT database.

maintaining their residence in Greece (Gemi 2014). Similarly, ethnic Greek migrants from the former Soviet Union may also seek work abroad as they have been doing before the crisis (Pratsinakis 2013), while an invisible segment of the outflow concerns former Greek emigrants and their children, who had in the meanwhile settled in Greece and now return anew to their old host countries (Cavounides 2014). Pre-existing links, alongside “pull” factors in terms of job demand and remuneration in specific sectors explain the persistence of “traditional” post-war destinations, as suggested by recent studies: Australia (Tamis 2014), the USA (Mihopoulos 2014), Canada (Konstandinidis 2014), or Germany (Georgiou et al. 2013; Damanakis 2014). Nevertheless, the range of destinations is highly diverse, spanning from the Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, or East Asia (Triandafyllidou/Gropas 2014; Labrianidis/Pratsinakis 2016). The majority, however, head to EU countries, with Germany and the UK attracting approximately half of the outflows (Labrianidis/Pratsinakis 2016; see also Figure 1⁵).

A recent study by Labrianidis and Pratsinakis (2016) conducted a nationwide representative survey to 1237 households in Greece, gathering information for 248 emigrants. About one third of them left Greece after 2010 while the rest had migrated in earlier decades, allowing for three interesting observations of changes over time. Firstly, the emigrants’ average age grows by emigration decade: from 24.3 years in the 1990s to 28.3 years in the 2000s and 30.5 years among post-2010 emigrants, while 11 per cent of the latter took the decision to migrate in their forties. Secondly, the largest part of post-2010 emigrants (approximately two thirds) comprises of people with university degrees, yet there is a considerable growth in the shares of postgraduate degree holders and graduates of medical and engineering schools, while significant proportions (approximately one third) have lower qualifications. In addition, there seems to be a relationship between the emigrants’ educational background and their choice of destination: e.g. the UK seems to attract primarily those with higher education, while Germany and other former guest worker’s destinations such as the Netherlands attract also people with middle or low skills. Thirdly, we see increased representation of lower income groups, representing 28 per cent among post-2010 emigrants, which is almost the double in comparison to their share during the previous decade.

⁵ Official statistics illustrated on Figure 1 show that, between 2010-2014, more than 141,000 Greek nationals have registered with a local authority in Germany (including e.g. students and dependent family members), while nearly 36,000 have received a National Insurance number in the UK (thus not including students or dependents).

The crisis thus not only feeds the resurgence of Greek emigration in terms of volume, but also brings qualitative changes. A major transformation seems to be underway: migration is now more a matter of need rather than one of choice. Even though the motivations of “crisis” migrants are not limited to mere economic need but are rather framed in a wider context of lack of prospects in the country, as well as positive evaluations of life and work abroad, worsening conditions in the Greek labour market and concerns about employment and income are primary motives for many.

At the same time, Labrianidis and Pratsinakis (2016) underline the difficulties of adaptation in destination places. One out of five of their survey respondents were not able to find a job within the first 6 months; a similar proportion were working below their qualifications and 6 per cent were unemployed, while some 15 per cent had already returned back to Greece. Moreover, qualitative material from their study, in accordance to previous research (Georgiou et al. 2013; Damanakis 2014b; Gropas/Triandafyllidou 2014), show that difficulties may be more widespread⁶, with a considerable segment of the emigrants who have not secured employment before emigration, including people of high educational backgrounds, ending up in low-skilled jobs for significant periods before they manage to find jobs matching their qualifications. In addition, although unrecorded in official statistics, the question of return is a reality beyond vague hopes or even actual plans, sometimes linked to temporary migration projects or subsequent mobility steps and livelihoods between “here” and “there”.

Dimensions of an emerging media discourse

Having outlined the broad picture and major trends of emigration from Greece at times of crisis, we now move on to explore relevant media debates. Our review of news articles reveals an emerging public discourse on new Greek emigration, which appears to be highly selective, often emotional and largely politicised. We focused on content, examining key themes, points of emphasis and perspectives, which allow us to broadly sketch the development of Greek media debates. In our attempt to dig back in time, we have not come across any articles on outmigration before 2010, and observed an exponential growth of news coverage from just a few items in 2010 and 2011, to nine in 2012, 11 in 2013, 12 in 2014 and

⁶ The survey results should be treated with caution due to the methodology of Labrianidis’ and Pratsinakis’ (2016) survey, according to which it is primarily not the migrant her/himself providing the answer but another member of the household, most commonly the parent. We may well assume that the emigrant paints a more positive image of his/her situation to his/her parent, hence adaptation difficulties may actually be more common as the qualitative data show.

23 in 2015. Most are mere news, reporting on latest statistics and figures, relevant studies and surveys, or personal stories; some combine facts and opinion, while about 16 per cent are commentaries. A general overview of the media reviewed and articles examined is given in Table 1.

Labrianidis' (2011) study has largely set the tone, monopolising early reports in 2010-11. Soon after the publication of his book, he introduced a public debate entitled "Should I stay or should I go in crisis-ridden Greece" on 6 June 2011 (organised by the international think tank "intelligence squared"), which attracted considerable media attention focusing descriptively on his main findings and arguments. Yet the deepening of the crisis, alongside escalating emigration trends, seem to have inspired a direct association between his study and the worsening conditions due to recession. Media reports on the book itself have been recurring over the years as a reference point often complemented by new evidence, yet misleadingly linking the findings to the crisis and ignoring that its empirical basis actually predated it. The titles of such reports are indicative: "139,000 scientists out of Greece" (Imerisia 24.06.2011); "New emigration wave: the Greeks, the crisis, and the routes of flight" (Ethnos, 28.01.2012).

Table 1. Overview of media articles reviewed

media type	
1. Online versions of print newspapers (national range, general interest) <i>Kathimerini</i> (9), <i>To Vima</i> (5), <i>Ethnos</i> (4), <i>Avgi</i> (2), <i>Eleftherotypia</i> (2), <i>Real News</i> (1)	23 (38.3%)
2. Online-only news media (general news) <i>TVXS</i> (6), <i>news247</i> (4), <i>huffingtonpost</i> (4), <i>iefimerida</i> (3), <i>greekreporter</i> (2) <i>Greece Tribune</i> (1), <i>protagon</i> , <i>i.gr</i> (1), <i>zougla.gr</i> (1), <i>newsit.gr</i> (1), <i>enikos</i> (1), <i>sky.gr</i> (1)	26 (43.3%)
3. Online versions of special interest or local newspapers <i>Lifo</i> (2), <i>Imerisia</i> (2), <i>Ardin</i> (2), <i>Macedonia</i> (1), <i>Popaganda</i> (1), <i>Parallaximag</i> (1), <i>Timeres</i> (1), <i>personal newsblog</i> (1)	11 (18.3%)
year of publication	
2010	2 (3.3%)
2011	3 (5.0%)
2012	9 (15%)
2013	11 (18.3%)
2014	12 (20.0%)
2015	23 (38.3%)
article type	
A. mere reportage	39 (65.0%)
B. reportage, combined with or based on testimonies	11 (18.3%)
C. opinion & analysis	10 (16.7%)

Source: Authors' own elaboration

A major theme has expectedly been that of rising unemployment affecting disproportionately the young; the periodic updating of relevant statistics was often covered with reference to emigration. Titles speak for themselves: “Unemployment banishes the young: almost half Greeks of productive age look for work abroad” (in.gr, 19.12.2012); “Greece drives her children away: youth unemployment at 58 per cent” (Macedonia, 09.01.2014). Even if the link between unemployment and emigration is not a direct one, the case is made by incorporating additional evidence deriving e.g. from opinion surveys on emigration intentions, or trends in job searches or CVs uploaded on the EURES or Europass job portals. Including questions about migration intentions has been a novelty in opinion polls administered e.g. by market research companies or employment agencies. Although these are often isolated questions and results do not necessarily correlate with other variables, they tend to be overemphasised in the media, underlining intentions as reality rather than as an indication of the general mood.

Emigration is thus primarily pictured as a brain drain, directed mostly to European destinations, although their diversity is not ignored: “Greeks leave abroad for work: big increases in the flow towards Britain, Germany, Norway and Belgium” (Tsakiri 2014); “Which countries are Greek scientists-migrants heading to: brain drain” (TVXS, 19.10.2015). However, specific countries and professions have attracted more publicity: about one out of four of the articles reviewed focus on Germany. Reporting on official Destatis statistics on recent immigration to the country, for instance, tend to emphasise information on Greeks: “Record-high migration of graduates towards Germany: new wave” (TVXS, 18.01.2014). Over 10 percent of news items are about doctors, mostly heading to Germany: “A flow of Greek doctors, as Germans emigrate” (Kathimerini, 12. 12.2013); “More than 7000 Greek doctors have left abroad due to the crisis” (Lifo, 21.12.2015).

The focus on Germany is no incidental: not only this is a major destination of new emigrants, as it has been in post-war times, but it is also the country blamed for the harsh austerity imposed on Greece as a condition for its bailout. Conditions there are occasionally depicted as far from ideal, revealing cases of difficult adaptation or even exploitation in the labour market, often by the older generation of former guest workers or by recruitment agencies: “Greeks exploit Greeks in Germany” (Galanis 2012); “Shocking testimony of a Greek migrant in Germany” (Dimou 2013); “Neomigrants are victims of exploitation” (Fotiadi 2014); “Berlin’s psychic clinics getting full of Greeks” (Ethnos, 28.10.2015).

Still, despite reporting on difficulties, mostly referring to the emigrants experiences in Germany, the overall tendency is to prettify conditions abroad, especially by highlighting successful individual cases of professionals “who made it”. Media articles are increasingly informed by personal stories and migrants’ own insights, which feed the news alongside official data and survey results. Sometimes these depict changes over time in individuals’ migration trajectories, or provide information for prospective migrants in specific countries or sectors: “A young Greek doctor in Germany” (Lifo, 15.07.2013); “Looking for a job in London” (protagon, 27.07.2014); “A Greek woman leaves abroad” (Stathopoulou 2015). In such accounts, the option of leaving Greece is presented as a unidirectional and irreversible path. It is only in 2015 that we first encounter articles on the issue of return, not simply reporting on emigrants’ intentions, but also through direct accounts of people who have already taken this step: “I have come back to Greece, but what for?” (Martinou 2015); “Return in crisis-ridden Greece” (Papadopoulos 2015).

Emigration has thus reappeared as both a reality and a societal concern increasingly evident in media discourses, a side effect of the crisis, recession and austerity. Its scale and volume have become significant enough to inspire works of art and TV shows alike. We are aware of at least three relevant theatre plays: one performed in 2013 (“Telemachus, or should I stay or should I go”, featuring amateur actors who have been migrants themselves), and two in 2015 (“I want a country...”, “Kangaroo”). Moreover, the brain drain from the perspective of emigrants has been the subject of numerous TV shows, including a documentary entitled “The great escape” (focusing especially on ophthalmologists), screened on a national channel on 6 August 2015. Although media debates have to an extent been politicized since the early years, emigration is increasingly depicted as a political issue, depending on different standpoints in the media: the “migration of 200.000 young talented Greeks” is labeled a “crime” (Imerisia, 19.01.2015) and brain drain is pictured as a “slow-burning bomb” (Kambouris 2015). This politicization also relates to the rise of emigration in policy agendas. Government change since January 2015 signaled for the first time an interest in taking action, with the new Prime Minister announcing a “long-term plan so that the thousands of young researchers currently employed at universities and research centers abroad return to the country. This bleeding must

stop as it negatively affects the growth prospects of the Greek economy...”⁷. As in other policy domains, this proved to be far from straightforward.

Concerns about the prospects of recovery of a country deprived of its young educated workforce seem to give shape to a hegemonic discourse in which emigration appears as loss, placing greater emphasis on its (negative) impact on the economy rather than on the lives of the migrants themselves. Highlighting successful cases may be read as attempt to boost the wounded national sentiment, forming hence the other pole in an ambivalent presentation of emigration, which on the one hand laments the “bleeding” of the nation, while, on the other, depicts it as an (easy) way out from a wrecked economy and a corrupt and inefficient state. The outflow of immigrants is only scarcely mentioned, and in the few cases it does (e.g. “Economic migrants fleeing Greece massively”; Tsiros 2014), it is described as an entirely separate trend, while the emigration of older people, the lesser educated, or minority groups is totally neglected. The diversity and complexity of outflows, their underlying structural roots, as well as the motivations, aspirations, trajectories and experiences of emigrants remain thus poorly understood. We next explore some of these, shifting our perspective towards an emerging European destination.

Greek migration to the Netherlands at times of crisis

The sailors who found work in and around the Rotterdam harbor as peddlers and shipbrokers, and the entrepreneurs who started cigarette factories or fur businesses in the early 20th century were the forbearers of a more extensive Greek immigration to the Netherlands in postwar times (Lindo 2000). In contrast to other nationalities, largely migrating in the framework of bilateral agreements, the majority of Greek “guestworkers” arrived on their own initiative, or by way of informal recruitment channels, mostly via Belgium and (less frequently) Germany (Vermeulen et al. 1985). A bilateral agreement was eventually signed in 1966, just a year before an economic downturn in the Netherlands and the coup d'état in Greece, therefore it did not result in much recruitment (Lindo 2000). In the following years, immigration subsided taking place mostly through family reunification. Free EU mobility for Greek citizens since the 1980s triggered modest flows, including students and people from the Muslim minority of

⁷ Prime minister’s A. Tsipras speech, during the programmatic statements of the then newly-elected Government, 08.02.2015, <http://www.primeminister.gov.gr/english/2015/02/08/primeministers-a-tsipras-speech-during-the-programmatic-statements-of-the-government> (accessed 20.03.2015).

Thrace, while a limited in scale emigration of professionals was underway already from the late 1990s. By the late 2000s, the Greek population in the Netherlands counted approximately 13,900 people, showing modest annual increases in the previous 15 years, to a large extent due to natural growth. Within five years since the outbreak of the crisis in Greece, the registered population surged by almost 40 per cent, reaching 19,217 people in 2014. Taking into account that several newcomers may not register, as indicated by our research, we may estimate that the increase was significantly higher, considerably diversifying the established Greek community in the country.

This section builds on qualitative material and survey data, in order to draw a comprehensive picture of new Greek migration to the Netherlands. The survey was conducted by Grammatikas as part of his involvement in the Greek community organization “Neoafihthendes” (meaning “newcomers” in Greek). More specifically, a set of exploratory key-informant interviews were initially conducted (Autumn 2013), which helped us understand the broad picture and organise the survey which was administered during December 2013 - February 2014. This was posted online on various relevant Facebook groups and further disseminated via personal email lists and key figures of the community. It deliberately targeted Muslims from Thrace, as an example of the migration of minority groups (which should also include Albanians and “Soviet” Greeks), of whose presence we were aware though they were not captured by the online survey. Their participation was achieved in a series of meetings, organised with the help of their associations, to provide information about life and work in the country. These gathered more than 120 people, 44 of whom filled in the questionnaire face-to-face, making up a share of about 28 per cent among 158 total respondents of the survey. Even though survey respondents were not selected via random sampling, which would be in any case impossible given the lack of a sampling frame, we actively tried to increase the diversity of the sample by recruiting respondents through a variety of diversified entry points to increase representativeness. Comparing our results with available official sources and through information we collected by systematically monitoring social media webpages set up by newcomers, we were able to assess that they are largely indicative of the trends within the new Greek emigrant population in the Netherlands, at least with the exception of minority Muslims from Greece who were purposively sampled.

The qualitative material was collected through participant observation in the Greek community house in Amsterdam, conducted by Pratsinakis as part of his ongoing IF Marie Curie project EUMIGRE, as well as through his engagement with the same community

organization during November 2015 - June 2016. We also use material from 8 in-depth interviews he conducted over this period in the context of the same project and three more interviews the same author had contributed to the project "Outward Migration from Greece during the Crisis" (Labrianidis/Pratsinakis 2006). On the basis of this diverse material, we identified different categories of recent migrants from Greece to the Netherlands in terms of their emigration patterns, the types of jobs they are doing, the degree to which those jobs match their qualifications, their experiences of settling in, and the ways they frame their experiences.

In agreement to the general trends earlier outlined, emigration to the Netherlands concerns primarily, but not exclusively, educated young adults. Sixty six per cent of survey respondents have tertiary education, while nearly half are between 20-30 years old, followed by more than one third in their thirties. Yet, emigration is materialised following different mobility strategies and settlement pathways. Several people, commonly with lower educational backgrounds, emigrate for short-term periods as target earners. They work seasonally in agriculture or horticulture aiming to contribute to the family income at home (as most minority Muslims do), in small contracting projects or Greek tavernas, to respond to immediate financial need or support themselves in wait of a job opening in Greece. Some may also come for short periods, to inquire into employment possibilities and life conditions through a first-hand experience of everyday life in the Netherlands. Many more arrive with more permanent settlement intentions, often hosted by friends or relatives who are already settled, after having collected enough information about life in the country but without having found a job. Others apply for jobs from Greece, sometimes declaring the local address of friends or kin in wait to be called for an interview, and some do secure employment in the Netherlands before settling in the country. We next draw on a range of different individual cases, as a step towards a typology of new Greek migration to the Netherlands.

Highly skilled migrants who have secured a job before arrival

Most of the emigrants who already have a job upon arrival do so in specific economic sectors for which there are gaps and/or increased demand. Such gaps do not necessarily concern chronic shortages and do change following labour market developments: for instance, a few years ago one could rather easily find employment as a dentist even without considerable working experience and without speaking Dutch, yet this is not possible anymore as the

dentists' job market got saturated in the meantime. High-demand sectors include the nine so-called "topsectoren" prioritised by the Dutch State in its attempt to retain a leading position or boost its competitiveness in the international market⁸. In these, there is global recruitment of people with a background in technology, applied and life sciences for positions linked to innovation, or for dynamic start-ups, in the context of the so-called global competition for talent. A recent report (Ooijevaar et al. 2015) approximating the "expat" population in the Netherlands counted 770 Greek-born employees matching this profile at the end of 2011⁹; despite its limitations, this gives an indication of their shares at about one tenth of Greeks in the country: at the end of 2011 the registered Greek population counted 15,052 people, of whom 7,483 were Greek-born and in working age. According to our survey, 23 per cent of respondents fit in this category, with 18 per cent working for multinational companies or international organizations. They are thus not a negligible segment of recent migrations.

For Greeks employed in such positions, emigration decisions are largely based on career opportunity considerations, and location/city options are weighted in terms of valued quality of life. They are also increasingly informed by perceptions about the lack of opportunities for career advancement, for those who did have employment in Greece, and by experiencing shrinking employment opportunities, for those who were unemployed. A rather separate category concerns professionals sent to the Netherlands by their international companies. Their emigration decisions are directly linked to the needs of their companies, which commonly provide them with substantial help with settling in, and are framed within a perspective attributing special value to international mobility for career advancement. Even if the mobility of this category of people is the least typical case of crisis-driven migration and actually predated the crisis, it is not always entirely unrelated as the case below suggests.

Tasos works for a big multinational company, and had just settled in Amsterdam when we spoke in January 2016. He told us that gradually it had become clear to him that sooner or later he would have to leave Greece if he was to keep (and advance) his position. It was the lack of alternative employment options in Greece that made international mobility appear as a necessity more than ever before, and led him eventually to take the decision to move. When

⁸ Those nine sectors are: 1) Agro & Food 2) Chemistry 3) Creative Industry 4) Energy 5) High Tech Systems and materials 6) Life Sciences & Health 7) Logistics 8) Horticulture and Starting Materials 9) Water

⁹ The report counted foreign-born employees either working in hospitals and Universities or receiving high salaries irrespectively of their sector of employment. The data exclude the self-employed, do not provide information on the year of arrival and are rather out-dated given the growth of Greek emigration since 2012.

he learned about an opening in Amsterdam he found it an attractive opportunity and, together with his wife, both in their early forties, they decided to emigrate. Tasos was concerned about how migration will affect his everyday life and worried of the impact it will have on his relationship. They had past experience of relocating in another city within Greece a few years ago, which did not work out positively especially as his wife was not able to find employment there. Despite his worries, however, he was excited about the experience of living abroad and was convinced that being eager to pursue career opportunities is what people should be after today. In his view, there always is labour demand, somewhere; one should be simply ready to meet it by following developments and being where s/he is needed.

Migrants in search for employment

In this rather broad category, we encounter people whose decisions to emigrate are less shaped by career considerations but primarily by a strong urge to escape crisis-ridden Greece and are hence eager to hasten their emigration projects, including graduates whose skills are not in much demand or people seeking work in sectors where recruitment does not take place through online solicitations. Most migrants come to the Netherlands to enquire for work opportunities with a certain amount of money ranging from a minimum of 2000 to a few thousand euros. Many have difficulties in their way to find employment matching their qualifications, and may end up in low-skilled jobs for considerable periods of time even if they are highly educated. Language barriers may be one of the reasons why their labour market integration proves to be difficult in practice, irrespectively of their skills. Among our survey respondents, some 85 per cent considered that limited knowledge of Dutch poses significant hindrances in everyday life and employment opportunities and claimed to be willing to upgrade their language skills by undertaking language classes. Knowing people in the Netherlands was reported to be equally important.

Yannis left Greece in late 2013 quitting his IT job, as he was heavily disappointed with the situation in the country and felt insecure for the future, seeing “*no potential for improvement in the years to come*”. He decided to move to Amsterdam where a good friend of his lived. It took him six months to find his first job and another six months to find one in his field, living in various temporary housing arrangements in the meantime. He told us he would not have made it without his savings, since for a long period his earnings were well below his costs. After a year in his new job Yannis got promoted and was offered a long term contract with a

good salary. He then rented out an independent apartment in Leiden, where he was joined by his wife and newborn son. He currently sees no reason of returning, and he would rather avoid re-migrating, at least in the short term, exhibiting a much less mobility-oriented attitude than Tasos.

Kostas, a trained hematologist, chose to migrate to Amsterdam in 2012 because his aunt Rina runs a restaurant there. He was hosted at her place and worked in her restaurant until he earned enough money to rent his own flat. He then found a second job in a café nearby and a few months later he was offered an annual contract in a museum restaurant. In the meantime, he had been learning Dutch looking for jobs matching his credentials. A similar pathway was earlier followed by Rina's son-in-law Petros, an engineer. After 1.5 years working in several restaurants in Amsterdam, Petros found a well-paid job in his field. It was taking longer for Kostas to find such a job but he was not disappointed. Although he told us that things are considerably more difficult in the Netherlands presently than in 2009, when Petros arrived, Kostas was rather confident that sooner or later he would find a good job too. He was not considering going back, as saw no chances of finding any work in Greece. In a follow up conversation, he had indeed managed to find employment in a company in a field close to his profession. He was happy with this development even though he confessed he did not expect it would take him three years to meet this goal.

In many cases, people like Kostas prefer staying abroad over returning back even if they have to work in low skilled jobs for prolonged periods of time. In Greece similar jobs are paid much less and usually do not provide social security, while they are also associated with a low social status. They thus stay abroad aiming to upgrade their language skills and build social networks that will help them to eventually find better jobs. It is this promise for a brighter future that keeps them abroad, even though there are also those who may decide to return. According to official data (Ooijevaar 2015), approximately 20 per cent of the 2008-2010 arrivals left within a year. Even if a considerable part concerns students leaving the country after completing their degrees, we may well assume that other cases are also included: people who are disillusioned with their experience in the Netherlands or whose life circumstances have changed, and may thus return to Greece or even emigrate instead to other destinations in search for better employment opportunities or more attractive career prospects.

Students into migrants

Part of the “newcomers” are former students at Dutch Universities who overstay after graduation. Some have come recently with that goal in mind, treating their studies as a first step to materialise their emigration; others were already students before 2010 and, although they were not originally planning to seek employment, as the crisis started deepening in Greece they were confronted with the dilemma “to stay or return”. It should be generally noted that student migration from Greece to the Netherlands has been on the increase in recent years: students comprise about a quarter of annual arrivals, with more than 2000 Greeks studying in the country at the moment¹⁰. Greeks are the sixth most populous nationality in Dutch Universities and the third in postgraduate degree programmes, with 75 per cent of Greek students enrolled for a Masters degree (Huberts 2015). As observed by Labrianidis and Pratsinakis (2016), those who study social sciences and arts and humanities seem to experience more difficulties in finding a job matching their background as compared to those who have studied medicine, applied sciences or IT, which in some cases makes their mobility and settlement projects rather ambivalent.

For instance, Alikı came to Amsterdam for postgraduate studies in the Social Sciences in 2014 and decided to stay. In the meantime, she found work in a cafeteria to support her living. Due to her demanding work schedule eventually she could not keep pace with the requirements of her studies. She thus decided to temporarily freeze her studies in order to raise the funds to redo the program in the following year. Chrysa, on the other hand, came with her boyfriend to follow an MA program in Political Science, but after her studies she could not find employment matching her qualifications. Being unemployed for one year, she decided to work voluntarily in an organisation which eventually hired her after eight months.

Yet, for others, the transition from studies to work turns out way beyond their aspirations, leading them to reconsider their migration projects. One such case is Anna’s, who had graduated from the same programme as Alikı and had also tried to stay in Amsterdam but did not manage to find any job meeting her expectations. She returned to Greece only to leave again within a few months, this time for Brussels. On the other hand, Achilleas, who studied Social Sciences in Amsterdam, decided to prolong his stay working in a big international hotel. After some time there, however, and having looked for job opportunities in his field, he felt that he had no chance in getting any job matching his qualifications, mainly due to

¹⁰ Holland became an attractive destination for studies due to the good reputation of Dutch Universities, the large number of study programs in English and, increasingly, the relatively low tuition fees, especially after the rise of tuition in UK Universities.

insufficient language skills and lack of social networks. Fully absorbed by the work rhythms of his hotel job, he felt that he was losing contact with his field of study. Although he was paid a salary way above what he would be paid Greece, he decided not to renew his contract and looked instead for a job related to his studies back home, even a low paid one. In a follow up discussion, he had managed to find a job related to his field on a three-month renewable contract, and was preparing his trip.

Migrants in precarious and exploitative conditions

A recent report (Booi et al. 2014, 24) unveiled that 18 per cent of the Greeks in Amsterdam were found to live in the poverty line. This category includes those who are forced to live with limited resources during their first steps in the country, as earlier recorded, but also people who stagnate in conditions of precarious living. Moreover, some report exploitative working conditions and discrimination in the labour market, particularly those working in low-skilled manual jobs or in the hotel and catering sector (especially in Amsterdam). The examples here draw on a diverse range of cases facing precarious and/or exploitative conditions, temporarily or in the long run. They come from the experiences of people who migrated at a later stage in their life course, the lesser educated, or minority groups.

The former case includes couples or even single parents emigrating in their late forties or older, who seem to be driven by pressing financial need and/or concerns about their children's future. Some leave their children behind and support them by sending money back home; others relocate together with their children aiming to build a life in the Netherlands which they consider better for the future of their offspring. The choice of destination is often linked to relatives living in the country, though this is not always the case. For instance, Eleni arrived after selling off her property in Greece to buy a house in Heerlen, where she relocated together with her (adult) son and daughter. They are currently making a living on her Greek pension and by renting out one room of their apartment, while her son and daughter try to find their way in the Dutch labour market which was the goal of their relocation.

Secondly, discrimination in the labour market may affect emigrants irrespective of their qualifications and sectors of work, although it is reportedly much more common among those with lower education attainments. More than half of the survey respondents reported experiences of labour market discrimination and/or negative stereotyping. The latter was the case especially in the early years of the crisis, when Greeks in the Netherlands were

stigmatized as lazy and corrupted, and were scapegoated “as if they were to be blamed for the European Crisis”, in the words of a survey respondent. Other respondents referred to cases of more direct discrimination, such as receiving lower wages than their Dutch counterparts, or employers not recognizing their qualifications, etc.

Although broader stereotyping now seems to have lessened, some people we have talked to in Amsterdam also reported exploitation in their work. Yorgos, for example, who does not have university education, came to Amsterdam looking for work in 2012. He found a job in the flower market but was very disillusioned from his emigration experience. His boss required him to stand still throughout the day, which physically exhausted him. He earned about 1200 euros a month after taxes, the minimum wage in the Netherlands yet much higher than any salary he ever had in Greece, but his living costs were much higher. Similarly to most newcomers, he could not afford renting an apartment on his own but could only rent a room for 400 euros. Elsa, on the other hand, a graduate in civil engineering, arrived as an intern in a start-up company via the Erasmus exchange scheme. She complained about long working days, way beyond those agreed in the contract, and a demand to perform activities that were irrelevant to the subject of her internship. At the end of the contract she was asked to continue working with a salary well below the minimum wage and for longer hours than is legally acceptable in the Netherlands.

Notably, exploitation at work is also reported by those working for Greek employers. Andreas, for example, who had worked in several Greek taverns, claimed that “he will never work for Greeks in the Netherlands again”. We also recorded instances of blatant exploitation. Such was the case of a group of people who were invited by a Netherlands-based Greek employer to come for temporary work in a renovation project in Volendam. When they finished their work, the employer had disappeared without having paid neither them, nor the landlord of the apartment where they stayed.

Lastly, exploitation and precarious employment are widespread among minority Muslims from Greece, as deriving from our survey results and the aforementioned meetings. Following earlier migration patterns, most appear to be spatially concentrated mostly in Rotterdam, Den Hague, but also Leeuwarden, where they are organised around local associations. According to estimations by community leaders more than 1000 people live in the Netherlands, a large share of whom have not registered their stay in the country. This is because they may not be aware of this requirement, or because they are unable to do so, or finally because they deliberately choose not to. In addition to settled migrants, a considerable number of minority

Muslims are coming and going on a seasonal basis. According to survey results, minority Muslims are on average older than most recent migrants from Greece and a large segment (40 per cent) has only primary education. They almost exclusively work in low status - low paid jobs, mostly in greenhouses, slaughterhouses and construction. One out of four does not have health insurance, as most work on hourly-paid contracts, while some are asked to register as free lancers and then given a zero hour contract so that employers do not have to pay for social and health contributions. Almost none speaks Dutch or English and many neither speak Greek, which is why many are dependent not only on their mostly Turkish-Dutch employers and employment brokers through whom they find work, but also from “accountants” as they call the people who do their paperwork charging them very high fees.

Concluding remarks

Some of the difficulties experienced by new migrants to the Netherlands as in most cases outlined above could perhaps have been smoother, if community structures and host society institutions were in place to support and provide orientation to newcomers. Although for minority Muslims community associations still play an important social role (even though this does seem to protect them against exploitative conditions and precarious living), this is not the case for most other recent migrants from Greece. The purpose and functions of community organizations set up by Greek immigrants of earlier decades have long faded away, while changes in Dutch integration policies have meanwhile led to decreasing (financial) support, depriving those surviving from the capacity to sustain a meeting place. Increasing arrivals of mostly younger migrants from Greece in recent years found hence no community infrastructure where they could seek information and support, while the image of existing associations as old-fashioned clubs for elderly “guestworkers” makes contact problematic.

We are aware of just one organization with a meeting place in Amsterdam that a group of recent migrants try to transform into a center for newcomers, as well as of a number of initiatives aiming at specific purposes (news-gathering, organizing parties, a student society, a network for psychological support). But the range and scope of these initiatives is fairly limited, and most new migrants lean on family and friends/acquaintances, or even employers for basic information and help. The main attempts towards some sort of community networking are to be found on the internet with various Facebook groups mushrooming in

recent years, on which newcomers share experiences and seek information on an impressive range of topics (from the criteria to receive unemployment benefit or finding a room to stay, to selling a sofa or sending a package to Greece); yet these seem to rest on the shoulders of a handful of people. Although the basic information a newcomer needs to know about life and work in the Netherlands can be found digitally quite easy, sometimes in Greek or at least in English, more detailed information can be only found in Dutch. Considering that most newcomers do not master the language, much of the information circulated in informal social and digital networks is not always reliable, and often generate situations of misinformation, indistinctness and confusion. Hence, as other EU migrants, recent arrivals from Greece make use of their basic right of free movement within the EU but are left in the dark about their rights and duties in the host country. The withdrawal of the state from providing minimum support shifts the responsibility for integration to the migrants themselves, and rests on the assumption that EU migrants do not have particular difficulties in their adaption pathways.

Of the multiplicity of individual pathways and migration experiences we have encountered, we hereby chose to highlight aspects that problematize idealistic perceptions of life and work “in Europe” often depicted in Greek media. Not only have we showed how adaptation to a new life abroad is not as straightforward, but we also accounted for neglected components of contemporary outflows, including people in need from a diverse range of socio-economic, educational and ethnic backgrounds. By highlighting difficulties, we do not intend to overlook the many positive experiences of Greeks in the Netherlands or other EU countries (and beyond), but rather to deconstruct conventional assumptions of emigration as a monolithic project and lifetime decision, of ‘successes’ and ‘failures’ as definite outcomes, of the youngest and brightest who are valued abroad but are doomed at home. People like those we have talked to in Amsterdam may be ‘pioneers of European integration’ in that they promote it in practice from below (Favell and Recchi 2009), yet they are at the same time product of its present-day shortcomings.

The Greek crisis has amplified pre-existing mobility patterns of young graduates, but also impacted on the mobility practices of people of other socio-economic backgrounds. Emigration turns into a survival strategy for many who are finding it hard to make ends meet, while, at the same time, it emerges as an increasingly appealing option for others in less pressing need who see their career potentials critically reduced. Outflows since 2009 appear to be comparable in size with those of post-war decades, but they take place alongside ongoing immigration to or through Greece. Moreover, there are significant differences in the socio-

economic, educational and demographic profiles of today's "crisis" migrants, while the macro-structural causes triggering emigration at present are radically different, as is its context and infrastructure. New migrants are not supported by state institutions and migration trajectories are shaped by their socio-economic background and social capital. People specialized in fields for which there is high demand can easily secure employment abroad in many cases even before they actually emigrate. People with lower education or skills that is not valued in the labour market of their destinations find it more difficult to find employment that matches their qualifications, as do those with poor language skills and lack of social networks. On the other hand, free movement within the EU makes emigration an easier mobility strategy to pursue, reducing its economic and psychological costs. Emigration is no longer seen as a once-in-a-life-time decision, as people increasingly move spontaneously and provisionally, looking for potential opportunities mostly in Northern Europe. This not only suggests the multiplicity of mobility pathways, but also the open and dynamic character of migration projects and processes, rather than simply the relocation from one place to another.

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