

Crisis brain drain: short-term pain/long-term gain?

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Introduction

In the context of the debt crisis, recession, austerity and their socio-political consequences, Greece is experiencing a new major wave of out-migration. Emigration has become a survival strategy for many people who are finding it hard to make ends meet, while, at the same time, it has also emerged as an increasingly appealing option for others in less pressing need, who see their chances of a career severely reduced.¹ A large part of the outflow comprises young graduates, thus raising concerns about the negative impact of the ongoing brain drain on the country's economy and society. The crisis-driven emigration of professionals that accounts for approximately two-thirds of the outflow has turned Greece into a major exporter of highly skilled labour to the countries of Northern Europe, thus replicating older 'core-periphery' relations within the EU.

While most of the pre-crisis emigrants saw their migration as a significant career move and many planned eventually to return to Greece, only a minority of the post-2010 migrants view their emigration in that way. Most of them emigrate because they feel they lack any prospects in their home country and due to their overall disappointment in the socio-economic situation in Greece, feelings which often go hand in hand with a deep disillusionment with the Greek political establishment and with state institutions. They make use of the right of freedom of movement, seeking a better future in other countries in the European Union, whose institutions they also blame for the socioeconomic condition their country currently finds itself in due to the extreme austerity policies imposed by the 'Institutions'.²

In this chapter we explore the magnitude, dynamics and impact of the current emigration flow of young graduates. Placing the phenomenon of the Greek brain drain in a historical continuum, we argue that its structural preconditions predate the crisis. In historical terms it is a phenomenon that can be primarily attributed to the low demand for highly skilled work in the Greek labour market and to related weaknesses in Greece's developmental plan, a situation that has led to an accumulated loss of competitiveness over time. Yet it is only now

that the brain drain has reached critical proportions, raising concerns about the prospects of recovery of a country that is being increasingly deprived of its young, educated workforce, an indispensable part of any attempt to alter its production model. The combined effect of the emigration of a highly educated labour force on the one hand and recession and austerity on the other and their mutually exacerbating relationship thus risks imposing a cycle of underdevelopment on the Greek economy.³

Taking into account the experiences and aspirations of the emigrants themselves as well as critical voices from the literature that warn against overly optimistic views of highly skilled migrants as agents of development, we conclude this chapter by suggesting concrete policies that could be implemented in the shorter and medium term. These are proposed as a means of alleviating the negative consequences of the phenomenon, and potentially turning the situation into an opportunity for the restructuring of the country in the future, provided that a viable and realistic agreement is reached in respect of Greek debt and austerity policies are abandoned. It is suggested that, in the current circumstances, this could not be done by focusing on a repatriation policy, since return in the short term is neither part of the plan nor an aspiration for most of the emigrants.⁴ Instead it could be done through establishing different means of cooperation, leading to the development of viable and sustained transnational ties between the expatriates and the Greek society and economy.

Development, the migration of professionals and the knowledge economy

Around the year 2000, levels of emigration among highly skilled people worldwide exceeded the rate of emigration of people with lower educational qualifications.⁵ Apart from the self-selectivity of migration, i.e. the fact that the highly skilled are among those most likely to move and indeed most capable of doing so, global competition for highly skilled professionals has increased in the past few decades triggered by neo-liberal deregulation and encouraged by selective migration management schemes in many destination countries of the North.⁶ This competition is related to an increased demand for highly specialized skills and to the rise of the so-called ‘knowledge economy’ in which human capital is seen as a vital factor in the economic development process.

The concept of the ‘knowledge economy’ was introduced in the mid-90s to account for the role of knowledge and innovation in economic development, especially in areas such as IT or biotechnology.⁷ Others proposed instead the term ‘learning economy’ to emphasize the fact that ‘the most important feature of modern economies is not only very intense use of

knowledge, but rather that the existing knowledge depreciates very fast'.⁸ In this context, expanding and upgrading their knowledge-base and human capital resources has become a central feature of the development strategy for countries (as well as cities and regions) either through training of the labour force, or by attracting highly educated people and people working in the creative industries.⁹

By contrast, the international migration of professionals presents a major challenge for sending countries, which are commonly also among the less highly developed ones. These countries see their position further weakened in this global competition,¹⁰ whereas receiving countries are able to reap the benefits of a skilled labour force in which they have not invested.¹¹ Negative repercussions include a decrease in the average educational levels,¹² loss of public funds invested in the formation of this human capital¹³ as well as, in many cases, loss of incoming physical capital, given that physical capital often follows human capital flows.¹⁴ Most crucially the international migration of professionals may be detrimental for the longer term development potential of countries of origin. Yet this is an issue on which views have been divided in the literature. On the one hand, there are those who argue that international migration of professionals massively erodes the human capital and fiscal revenues of sending countries, driving them into a spiral of underdevelopment. On the other, there are those that argue that international migration of professionals may act as a potent force for developing the economy of sending countries through remittances, trade, direct foreign investment, and knowledge transfer.

Following broader ideological and paradigm shifts one may see variations in terms of the predominance of one or the other viewpoint over time.¹⁵ For instance, in the 1970s and 1980s scholars influenced by dependency theory rightly criticized earlier ideas anchored to the modernization paradigm that linked migration with development through a supposed optimal equilibrium between capital and labour, something that was expected to follow flows of remittances and human capital between developed and less developed countries. Reversing the causality of the equation, they argued that it is underdevelopment in the periphery (caused by dependency on and exploitation by the countries of the core) that leads to the emigration of the highly skilled, which in turn feeds further underdevelopment in the periphery and contributes to sustaining inequalities on a global scale. In this context, the brain drain was seen as one of the ways through which migration acts as an exploitation mechanism for countries of the periphery.

More recently such views are once again being questioned. On the one hand, this is done by reasserting arguments based on neoclassical economics, presenting migration as a means towards the better allocation of production factors, higher productivity and the win-win situation envisaged to follow. Migration, it is argued, enables people to increase the returns on their skills and their 'human capital', which is to their own advantage as well as to the benefit of the economies of the sending and receiving states. Yet, the 'triple-win' potential it supposedly entails (for countries of origin and destination, and for the migrants themselves), is based on functionalist, competition-driven and economically deterministic views that are rarely confirmed in practice.¹⁶

On the other hand, views about the detrimental consequences of international migration of professionals on the development potential of the countries of origin are also challenged by diaspora scholars and those studying processes of transnationalism, who conceive the presence of a highly educated labour force abroad as a mobilized asset for sending countries.¹⁷ Those scholars highlight the importance of expatriate networks, which can potentially form a significant resource when they are connected to countries of origin. They also stress that the negative aspects of the brain drain phenomenon can be – under certain circumstances – reversed. There are two ways for a country to benefit from its professionals working abroad. One is to focus on their return (return option) and the other is to try to utilize this human capital, taking for granted that it will remain abroad (diaspora option).¹⁸ Until the 1980s, national and international policies focused on controlling the loss of professionals or on mitigating the negative impact by tax incentives for those who returned. However, the results were in most cases unsatisfactory.¹⁹ More recently most of the initiatives have focused on the so-called diaspora option. The aim is to capitalize on the networks, resources and knowledge of the nationals abroad through remittances, investments and 'brain exchange and circulation'.²⁰

However, despite the need to recognize the day-to-day contributions migrants make to improve the well-being, living standards and economic conditions of countries of origin and related empirical evidence indicating that migrants can potentially accelerate development, there is also a need to acknowledge that they cannot set in motion broader processes of human and economic development all by themselves. Warning against overly optimistic views, de Haas²¹ argues that the recent policy focus on the role of diasporas fits into neoliberal development paradigms that tend to overemphasize the power of markets and individuals to bring about political-economic change and social transformation.²² Such views risk neglecting

broader structural constraints such as ingrained socio-economic and power inequalities. Moreover, they also underplay the significant role that may continue to be played by emigration states on the one hand – by creating favourable conditions for human development – and by immigration states on the other – through policies that empower (rather than exploit) migrants and thus maximize their social, human and economic capacity to contribute to development in their countries of origin.²³

The structural preconditions to the Greek brain drain

In the postwar era up until the 1970s emigration flows almost uniformly comprised people with little formal education who left the country to fill the gaps in the booming industrial sectors of Western countries, especially in Europe. Highly skilled migration was to a large extent a matter of choice for the upper classes, and many emigrants left the country for reasons other than employment.²⁴ However, labour market restructuring led to the deterioration of employment opportunities for those born from the 1970s onwards and to ongoing relatively high unemployment, underemployment and employment precariousness in the 2000s.²⁵

This was *not* mainly due to Greeks being ‘over educated’, as conventionally assumed.²⁶ While the numbers of those with a university degree have increased substantially in past decades, they are not among the highest in Europe or, in more general terms, in the developed world. In particular, in the period 2006–2015 Greece ranked 21st in the EU-28 with 29.3% of the population aged 25–44 having completed tertiary education, which is lower than the EU-28 average (31.7%), as are the percentages for graduates in the 25–34 and 25–64 age brackets. In fact, the rapid expansion in the take-up of tertiary education in Greece was not matched by a corresponding increase in demand for high-skilled human capital by businesses in Greece. Indicatively, Greece had one of the lowest rates of employment in high-technology sectors in 2008–15 in the EU, while Research and Development expenditure in Greece is much lower than the EU-28 average and the comparison is even more unfavourable when it comes to the contribution of the private sector (54.6% EU, 32% EL). Thus the explanation for the unfavourable conditions for graduates in Greece in past decades lies not in the supply side of a supposedly excessively highly skilled workforce, but rather in the demand side of a labour market failing to absorb this workforce.²⁷

Greek firms, mostly due to their small size and several other related weaknesses, have been mainly focused on the production of low-cost products and services and have avoided any attempts at upgrading, including the infusion of technology and innovation. These characteristics have hindered the utilization of a highly educated labour force that could act as an intermediary between universities/research centres and the private sector. Combined with the fact that the Greek Research and Development system is not able to attract and retain the growing number of qualified scientists, this has led a significant share of these graduates to migrate abroad, in order to seek employment with better prospects there.²⁸ Moreover, the ‘informality’ of the national economy as well as nepotism have affected the relative significance of graduates in the Greek labour market. The migration of professionals to specific countries was also influenced by the average wages of graduates in those countries. As our 2009–2010 survey showed,²⁹ outside Greece there is a clear correlation between levels of education and salaries, but when migrants returned to Greece they tended to have lower wages that did not increase in tandem with their academic qualifications.

As a result, even before the outbreak of the crisis a considerable number of highly skilled young Greeks had been emigrating for better career prospects, better chances of finding a job related to their specialization, a satisfactory income and increased opportunities for further training. Yet, the outmigration of graduates intensified significantly as job opportunities shrank in the shadow of the crisis and once public sector employment was no longer an option as a result of cuts and restrictions in new recruitments.³⁰ A comparative presentation of unemployment rates in Greece and the EU over the past ten years provides a graphic depiction of Greece’s exceptionalism as regards the position of the highly skilled in the labour market and explains the sharp increase in emigration among these workers in the period of the crisis.

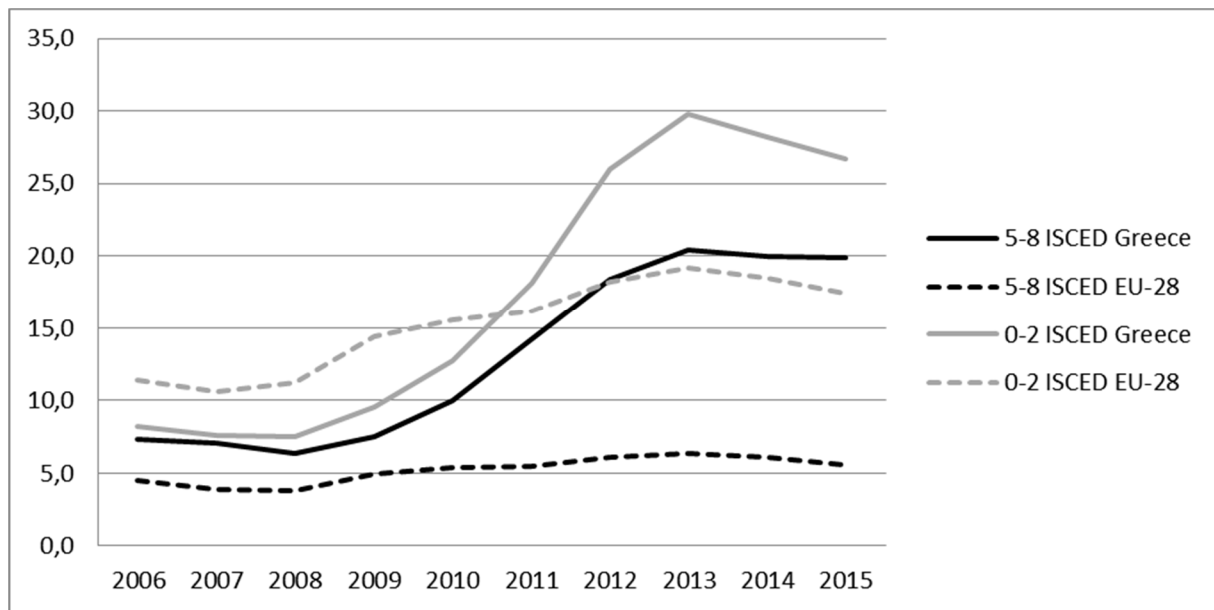


Chart 1. Unemployment levels in Greece by educational attainment

Source: Eurostat (http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_urgaed&lang=en)

As seen in chart 1, in the years directly preceding the onset of the global financial crisis and up to 2010 unemployment rates among the poorly educated (0-2 ISCED) were significantly lower in Greece than the EU-28 mean. In fact from 2006 to 2008 they were on a par with those of graduates, indicating that education did not provide significant advantages in terms of access to the labour market in Greece. This changed with the crisis, which had a direct and much more acute impact on the less privileged. In Greece, as elsewhere in Europe, unemployment rates for less well educated people became higher than for those with higher education. Yet, while in most European countries the unemployment rates of more highly educated people increased only marginally, if at all, in Greece they skyrocketed, being almost four times higher those of the EU-28 mean, making the push-pull factors for Greeks with higher education particularly strong.

Greek emigration in times of crisis

In the context of a contraction in GDP of more than a quarter between 2008-2014, the crisis in Greece severely undermined the employment prospects of the entire workforce and also brought about steep decreases in earnings, welfare provision and allowances. The combined effects of recession, extreme austerity, and a concomitant generalized mistrust of institutions and the political system changed mobility intentions drastically. While until recently Greek citizens were amongst those Europeans who least favoured long distance mobility, many

people have been forced by circumstances to change their views in a very short period of time.³¹ According to EUROSTAT, in a four-year period, from 2010 to 2013, approximately 208,000 Greek citizens left Greece and to that number we should add an approximately equal number of foreign nationals, who returned to their countries of origin or were forced to migrate again due to the crisis. In a recent study we conducted,³² which included a nationwide representative survey of 1,237 households in Greece (Hellenic Observatory survey, HO survey from here on), we estimated that the total emigration outflow of Greek citizens from 2010 until the end of 2015 ranged between 280,000 and 350,000 people. Given our findings on return migration in that period, which was recorded as 15% of the total outflow, we can estimate that by the end of 2015 240,000 to 300,000 post-2010 Greek emigrants were living abroad.

The magnitude of the outflow has attracted considerable media attention and has triggered a public debate on the ongoing Greek brain drain. Yet the discussion is often characterized by two misconceptions.³³ First, the emigration of the highly skilled is presented as a new phenomenon resulting from the crisis, while the underlying structural causes of the phenomenon are not addressed. Second, the crisis-driven emigration is presented as exclusively pertaining to the young and the educated and the emigration of older people, the less well educated, or minority groups is often neglected.³⁴ The crisis has amplified push factors that already existed in Greece for the highly skilled, intensifying their emigration patterns. But it has also impacted on the mobility aspirations and practices of people of other socio-economic backgrounds. Even though they form a minority of emigrants, the crisis seems once again to be pushing people of lower educational backgrounds out of the country.

Thus, the emigration of the highly educated in the post-2010 period should be understood as a continuation of an earlier ongoing phenomenon and a part, albeit a very significant one, of the new crisis-driven emigration. According to the findings of the HO survey approximately 190,000 graduates live outside Greece, of whom more than the half emigrated after 2010. Two out of three of the post-2010 emigrants are university graduates and one fourth of the total outflow represents people with postgraduate degrees or who are graduates of medical schools and polytechnics. As seen in Chart 2, the percentage of those emigrants as part of the total emigration outflow has risen considerably since 2010. Thus it is not only the sheer numbers of professionals emigrating that has vastly increased but also the percentage of those with the most years in education, thus constituting a double drain on the country.

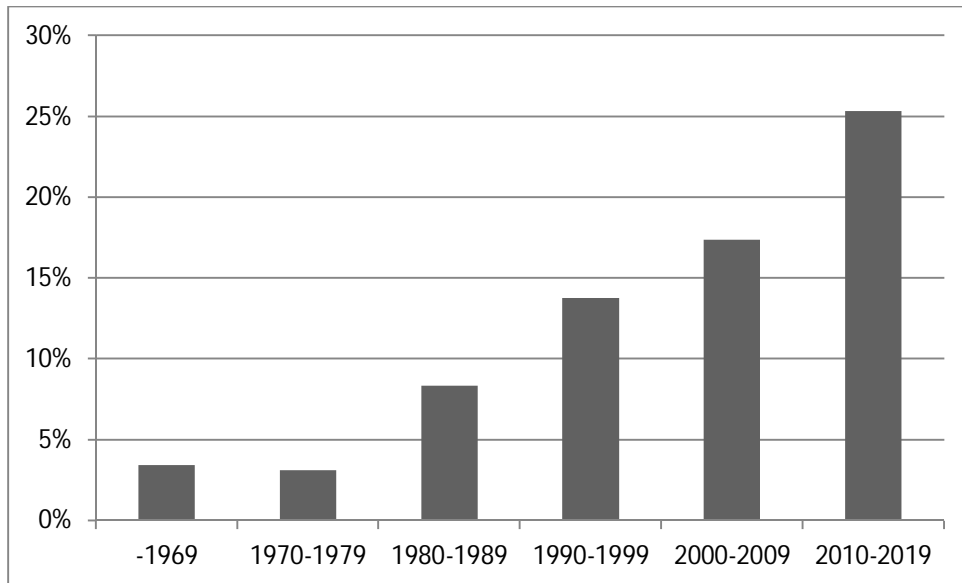


Chart 2. Percentage of postgraduate emigrants by decade of emigration (including graduates of 6-year medicine and 5-year engineering degree programmes)

Source: HO Survey data

The new emigrants are heading to a variety of destinations from the Middle East to the Far East and from Eastern Europe and the Balkans to Canada and Australia. The vast majority, however, seem to be heading to EU countries. Germany and the UK in particular attract by far the largest share of the outflows, accounting for more than half of the post-2010 emigration. Our HO survey data indicates that there are differences in terms of the educational background of the emigrants according to the country of destination. Those who immigrate to Britain are almost exclusively people with high educational qualifications, while Germany attracts a considerable number of people with low to medium levels of education (43% of the total inflow) in addition to the highly educated.

According to the HO survey data, those with low to medium levels of education commonly find jobs abroad via their social networks, while highly educated emigrants find jobs mostly through applications for (publicly advertised) vacancies based on their own attainments. It thus seems that more poorly educated people migrate to Germany and other former guestworker destinations because they can make use of social networks that are available to them from earlier emigrations.

Concerning the economic background of the emigrants, our findings indicate that, after the year 2000, the households with very high incomes are the ones that are the most likely to ‘send’ emigrants abroad; a trend that has persisted in the crisis period. In particular, for the period 2010–2015, emigrants from households with very high incomes comprise 9% of the

total outflow, even though those households form only 2% of the total survey sample. Emigration is a costly project and thus more easily undertaken by those with means. However, the adverse socioeconomic position in which many people have found themselves as a result of years of austerity politics in Greece has led to a sharp increase in the rate of emigration of people from 'low to very low' income households. While before the crisis this category used to be the least prone to emigrate, they now constitute 28% of the post-2010 emigration outflow, a percentage that is on a par with their share in the total sample (26%).

Change is also observed in the breakdown by age of the emigrant population. According to the HO survey data, the average age of emigrants is 30.5 years in the post-2010 period, which is six years higher than in the 1990–1999 period (24,3). As regards remittance flows, according to the HO survey findings, the vast majority of migrants neither send nor receive money (68%). It thus appears that emigration contributes mainly to the subsistence and/or the socio-economic progress of the emigrants themselves and not of the household as a whole. Only 19% of emigrants, who come, as might be anticipated, mainly from low and very low income households, send money to Greece. The low volume of remittances is further corroborated by data from the World Bank according to which their value has been progressively decreasing from 2008 onward.³⁵

Feelings of attachment and prospects of mutual assistance and knowledge transfer

As noted above, since the early 2000s the 'diaspora option' has become the most popular policy response by governments facing considerable outflows of highly educated people. Yet such policies are often driven by a narrow definition of the communities they recognize as their diasporas. In so doing they overlook the multiplicity of the aspirations of nationals abroad, while restricting their attention to a certain segment of the diaspora whose actions practices they try to channel towards a certain predefined developmental plan.³⁶ Such an approach limits the potential for cooperation and can alienate people and organizations that are already engaging in all kinds of development activities in the broader sense of the term and not necessarily equated with economic growth. In addition, interconnected questions concerning on the one hand the ability and on the other hand the willingness of nationals abroad to help should be central to any policy approach that reaches out to them. Below, drawing on twenty-one in-depth interviews that were conducted with highly skilled emigrants in the city of Amsterdam and the Greater London area in the context of the EUMIGRE

project,³⁷ we provide some evidence about the aspirations of Greek expatriates and the potential for knowledge exchange and cooperation with institutions, professionals and businesses in Greece.

Analyzing the accounts of our informants on how they relate to Greece, we can see that, in some cases, the crisis and the grim socioeconomic situation in Greece had triggered the urge to act and ‘do something’, especially among those most settled abroad (the majority of whom had left before the crisis).³⁸ It should be noted that in the two cities in which we conducted the research there were already a number of new initiatives in place with very diverse aims, such as trying to organize and mobilize the diaspora, providing orientation to newcomers, channeling economic support to Greece, debunking negative representations about Greece abroad, informing and supporting potential investors in Greece, assisting emigrants in developing new innovative businesses, etc.³⁹

Most of our informants told us that they felt very close to family and friends in Greece and were deeply concerned about their conditions and the gloomy prospects back home. The vast majority of them also expressed strong feelings of attachment to Greece as a place and physical environment and constructed a positive image of contemporary Greekness with reference to an extrovert way of life and the more caring attitude in social terms that they felt characterized everyday culture in Greece. They contrasted this image positively with what they identified as the individualistic life of Western Europe. Several of our informants also told us that they came to feel more Greek outside Greece than they did when living there. The experience of migration made them re-evaluate positively certain aspects of what they identified as Greek culture. Equally important for some of them was the emphasis on Greekness as a quality stemming from the ancient heritage in which they felt they had a part and which was a source of pride to them and a way of boosting their self-esteem in their interpersonal interactions with non-Greeks abroad. It was this quality, however, that they deplored as absent from present-day Greece.

To our question about their willingness to develop transnational professional collaborations with institutions and businesses in Greece, several of our informants claimed that they would like to do so and some described concrete plans they had already implemented or were about to. Development of transnational activities and transfer of knowledge between Greece and the countries of settlement of the new emigrants is already a reality. Yet our material also highlights a number of barriers that the emigrants perceived to exist or experienced in their

attempts to engage in partnerships or transnational activities with Greece. Some of our informants, for instance, expressed reservations about pursuing any such plans in the light of what they described as a typically Greek narrow-minded attitude of suspicion towards new ideas and envy of success. At the same time, many of our respondents were very critical about Greek state institutions, bureaucracy and the business culture in Greece and made reference to a lack of transparency in employment conditions, onerous bureaucracy in dealings with the state and insufficient support by institutions.⁴⁰

It should be noted that the more recent emigrants were the least inclined to engage in any sort of transnational activity with Greece. That was for two reasons. First, many of them felt betrayed by the Greek state and some of them told us that they felt that they were pushed out of their country. Their bitterness made them negative about trying to reconnect with Greece. They considered it quite reasonable to focus their energy on building their life abroad and felt that any engagement with Greece would be a backward step. Moreover, and not unrelated to this, it should be noted that several of the more recent emigrants are still struggling to build lives for themselves in Amsterdam and London and in that context developing relations with institutions and people in Greece was not currently a priority to them.

This was particularly the case for people seeking work in fields not highly valued in the labour market of their destination cities and, in the case of Amsterdam, in jobs for which fluency in the local language was essential.⁴¹ Unlike those specialized in fields such as IT and engineering, who could easily secure employment abroad, others, usually graduates in the humanities and social sciences, found it much more difficult to find employment that matched their qualifications. If they lacked the necessary economic resources to invest further in their training and education or to support themselves until they had built up their social networks in the receiving country and improved their language skills, in many cases they ended up working for extended periods in jobs below their skill levels. Such difficulties in adapting to their destination countries obviously weakened their capacity and willingness to seek any transnational ties with Greece.

Policy recommendations

Greece has long postponed the move from a low-cost to a knowledge-based economy, despite the fact that since the 1990s a significant upward trend in higher education studies was observed in the country. As a result, the Greek economy has been unable to take advantage of the presence of a highly educated workforce and even before the crisis many highly educated

people left the country in search of employment that corresponded to their qualifications and career ambitions. In the past few years, in times of crisis and austerity politics, the ongoing brain drain has acquired alarming proportions, triggered by a sudden aggravation of the unfavourable conditions in the national labour market that were already acting as push factors.

In this context, the need for a state policy aimed at alleviating the negative consequences of this phenomenon is acute. In the current circumstances focusing on a repatriation policy will not do, since return to Greece in the short term is not something most emigrants are planning or indeed dreaming of. Instead the focus should be on helping to develop means of cooperation which could lead to the development of viable and sustained transnational ties between them and the Greek society and economy.

Our findings in Amsterdam and London highlight the considerable willingness on the part of settled members of the Greek diaspora to develop transnational economic relations with Greece and indeed many people have already taken steps in this direction. Yet we also recorded considerable reservations towards state institutions, suggesting that any policy towards the diaspora should first concentrate on restoring the state's credibility in the eyes of expatriates. Policy aims should be framed in such a way as neither to appear patronizing nor to be treating Greeks abroad as owners of resources that can 'be tapped',⁴² but rather as collaborators in a common mission. The approach needs to be as inclusive as possible and the measures aimed at the highly skilled recent emigrants needs to be part of a broader strategy addressing the diaspora as a whole. That means that the policy should also address older expatriate communities but also lower skilled migrants living abroad, recognizing their existing contributions and support, starting from the fact that they are the ones most likely to be sending remittances back home. Such an approach should thus also include interventions and measures that support initiatives or structures abroad that empower low skilled emigrants as well as those better educated Greeks abroad who are facing difficulties. The smoother the adjustment of the emigrants to their new homes, the greater their willingness and ability to contribute to Greece is likely to be and the consulates could play a much more active role in that respect.

In relation to the group that forms our focus here, namely the more highly educated migrants and particularly the most settled among them, it is suggested that state policies should actively support existing bottom-up initiatives not only as a means of recognizing their contributions but also as a way of identifying the areas in which expatriates perceive opportunities or the

need for action and as an optimal way of connecting and expanding relations with them. As Brinkerhoff argues, the aim should be to target interventions to those members of the diaspora who are already mobilized, willing, and able to contribute; that is 'governments should primarily target the mobilized, and not seek to mobilize the targeted'.⁴³ At the same time, Greek professionals working abroad should be considered as a significant 'pipeline' connection between the Greek economy and productive and innovative international centres. Every Greek professional working abroad should be seen not only as a unit, but as a 'node' in a system with many connections that can link the Greek economy with this system.

Thus, state policy needs to be coordinated by a comprehensive structure operating on different levels and promoting the interconnection of expatriate professionals with the Greek society and economy in a systematic and sustained way. The broad strategy could be devised by an executive body in the Ministry of Economy and Development, advised by a steering committee consisting of Greek professionals, entrepreneurs, academics, researchers and artists who live and work abroad. Policy goals need to be informed by research findings and regular research into the brain drain phenomenon should be supported. At the same time, monitoring and evaluating policy goals and instruments should be a continuous process. On the public sector side, a lean and flexible operational team should also be set up to solve practical issues. A number of actions could be promoted by such a policy structure in the short term such as a) the creation of a website that will provide constantly updated information for those wishing to return to or to cooperate with Greece while working abroad, b) the organization of events in Greece and abroad, in cooperation with charitable organizations, private donors, Greek communities, and Greek professional associations abroad, c) the designation of liaison offices at Greek consulates in countries with a significant concentration of Greek academics, d) the provision of incentives to build networks developing relations with Greece as well as rewards for all notable initiatives, e) the promotion of schemes enabling collaboration between both the public and private sector and those networks abroad, e.g. by creating opportunities for expatriate Greek academics to participate in research projects in Greece or by offering Greek professors abroad the chance of dual appointments, or by promoting cooperation in the private sector in the form of educational and training seminars taught by invited professionals and f) by encouraging alumni associations to establish effective links between graduates who are either continuing their studies or working abroad.

Such actions could provide a platform allowing emigrants to transfer their ideas and knowledge through collaborations with universities, research centres and private companies,

by working intermittently in their country of origin or by establishing their own businesses, a 'bridge' that might later bring them back. That said, while the issue of return may be seen as a longer term aim, the containment or at least moderation of the ongoing outflow is critical at present. The emigration of professionals has currently acquired momentum and through a process of cumulative causation⁴⁴ threatens to alter the demographic make-up of the country and to bring about significant labour shortages in certain fields of the economy, thus further limiting their potential not only for advancement but sustainability. Thus small-scale actions with immediate results are necessary to retain young graduates.

A number of such actions are being put into practice with the aim of: a) promoting self-employment among graduates, b) allowing the recruitment of people with doctorates to universities and technical colleges, so that they can acquire academic teaching experience and c) promoting positive discrimination for young postdocs to be recruited as teaching staff in the Open University. Yet further action is needed to create a more challenging and attractive working and business environment through incentives provided by the incentives law, structural funds or the Juncker Plan. Moreover, further unravelling of bureaucracy and better coordination among public institutions are also required, as is the creation of an institutional framework that monitors and ensures the quality of employment conditions. Finally, the setting up of policies that enable people to take the first steps in starting their own companies is critical, especially given the current high social security/tax costs for freelancers in Greece. As a means to that end it is suggested that NSRF funds would be better employed if allocated to subsidizing the social security contributions of start-up companies and freelancers rather than as one-off grants.

These policy measures are a necessary part of the process of altering the mode of economic development of the country and steering the economy towards the production of products and services with a higher knowledge content. To that end the Greek state must publicly and formally recognize the fundamental value of this human capital and constantly encourage the creation of a more meritocratic labour market, in order to ensure that the highly-educated labour force is not only employed as befits its skills and knowledge, but also occupies a central role in the Greek administrative/political system and the decision-making centres. Even though highly skilled expatriates cannot steer the process of changing the developmental model of a country all by themselves, they can be extremely valuable partners in such a process. In Greece's case, that could eventually help address the reasons that led to their

leaving in the first place, hence also enabling the return of some of them with positive outcomes for the Greek economy, society and culture.

NOTES

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¹ Lois Labrianidis and Manolis Pratsinakis, 'Greece's New Emigration at Times of Crisis,' *GreeSE: Hellenic Observatory Papers on Greece and Southeast Europe* paper 99 (2016), pp. 1-38.

² 'Insitutions', formerly 'Troika', is the term used for the triumvirate representing Greece's creditors.

³ Lois Labrianidis and Nikos Vogiatzis, 'The Mutually Reinforcing Relation between International Migration of Highly Educated Labour Force and Economic Crisis: The Case of Greece,' *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 13/4 (2013), pp. 525-551.

⁴ Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 'Greece's New Emigration at Times of Crisis'

⁵ Jean-Christophe Dumont, Gilles Spielvogel and Sarah Widmaier, *International Migrants in Developed, Emerging and Developing Countries: An Extended Profile* OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, 2010.

⁶ Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos (ed.), *Wanted and Welcome?: Policies for Highly Skilled Immigrants in Comparative Perspective* (New York, 2013); Devesh Kapur and John McHale, *Give Us Your Best and Brightest: The Global Hunt for Talent and its Impact on the Developing World* (Washington DC, 2005);

⁷ Aimee Kuvik, 'The Race for Global Talent, EU Enlargement and the Implications for Migration Policies and Processes in European Labour Markets,' in Brigit Glorius, Izabela Grabowska-Lusinka and Aimee Kuvik (eds), *Mobility in Transition : Migration Patterns After EU Enlargement* (Amsterdam, 2014), pp. 113-132; Anna Lee Saxenian, *Silicon Valley's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs*, Vol. 32 (San Francisco, 1999).

⁸ Peter Nielsen and Bengt-Åke Lundvall, *Innovation, Learning Organizations and Industrial Relations*, DRUID Working Paper, 2003.

⁹ Ibid.; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives: A Strategic Approach to Skills Policies* OECD, 2012.

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¹⁶ Triadafilopoulos, *Wanted and Welcome?*

¹⁷ Jean-Baptiste Meyer, 'Network Approach Versus Brain Drain: Lessons from the Diaspora', *International Migration* 39/5 (2001), pp. 91-110.

¹⁸ Jean-Baptiste Meyer and Mercy Brown, *Scientific Diasporas. World Conference on Science*, UNESCO - ICSU, Budapest, 26 June-1 July 1999. Available at <http://digital-library.unesco.org/shs/most/gsdll/cgi-bin/library?e=d-000-00---0most--00-0-0--Oprompt-10---4-----0-11--1-en-50---20-about---00031-001-1-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&c=most&cl=CL4.1&d=HASH018238f95602a0dbde930783>

¹⁹ There have been some successes for repatriation policies but they were either in newly industrialized countries, such as Singapore and the Republic of Korea, or in large countries, such as China and India, where the robust repatriation programmes of the 1980s were followed by the creation of significant R&D structures and high development rates.

²⁰ Elizabeth Mavroudi, 'Helping the Homeland? Diasporic Greeks in Australia and the Potential for Homeland-Oriented Development at a Time of Economic Crisis' in Anastasia Christou and Elizabeth Mavroudi (eds), *Dismantling Diasporas: Rethinking the Geographies of Diasporic Identity, Connection and Development* (New York, 2015), pp. 175-187.

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- ²¹ Hein de Haas, 'Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective', *International Migration Review* 44/1 (2010), pp. 227-264; de Haas, 'The Migration and Development Pendulum', pp. 8-25.
- ²² Hélène Pellerin and Beverley Mullings, 'The 'Diaspora Option', Migration and the Changing Political Economy of Development,' *Review of International Political Economy* 20/1 (2013), pp. 89-120.
- ²³ De Haas, 'The Migration and Development Pendulum', p. 21.
- ²⁴ Lois Labrianidis, *Επενδύοντας στη φυγή: Η διαρροή επιστημόνων από την Ελλάδα την εποχή της παγκοσμιοποίησης* [Investing in Leaving: The Greek Case of International Migration of Professionals in the Globalization Era] (Athens, 2011).
- ²⁵ Maria Karamessini, 'Life Stage Transitions and the Still-Critical Role of the Family in Greece' in Dominique Anxo, Gerhard Bosch, and Jill Rubery (eds), *The Welfare State and Life Transitions. A European Perspective*, (Cheltenham, 2010), pp. 257-283.
- ²⁶ With the exception of certain disciplines, such as medicine and law, in which a growing demand during past years resulted indeed in saturated job market prospects.
- ²⁷ Lois Labrianidis, 'Investing in Leaving: The Greek Case of International Migration of Professionals', *Mobilities* 9/2 (2014), pp. 314-335.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
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- ³⁰ Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 'Greece's New Emigration at Times of Crisis'.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Manolis Pratsinakis, Panos Hatziprokopiou, Dimitris Grammatikas, Lois Labrianidis, 'Crisis and the Resurgence of Emigration from Greece: Trends, Representations, and the Multiplicity of Migrant Trajectories' in Brigit Glorius, and Josefina Domínguez-Mujica (eds), *European Mobility in Times of Crisis. The New Context of European South-North Migration* (Bielefeld, 2017), pp.75-102.
- ³⁴ The outflow of immigrants which, as mentioned above, amounts to half the post-2010 wave of emigration, has also been overlooked. In relative terms foreign nationals were more likely to leave Greece as a result of the crisis than were Greek citizens.
- ³⁵ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT>
- ³⁶ Hein de Haas, 'Engaging Diasporas. How Governments and Development Agencies can Support Diaspora Involvement in the Development of their Origin Countries,' International Migration Institute (IMI), University of Oxford, for OXFAM NOVIB (2006); Giulia Sinatti and Cindy Horst, 'Migrants as Agents of Development: Diaspora Engagement Discourse and Practice in Europe', *Ethnicities* 15/1 (2015): pp. 134-152.
- ³⁷ The interviews were conducted between January and August 2016. The informants were aged from 26 to 38 years and they had emigrated to the Netherlands and England respectively from 2006 onward.
- ³⁸ As mentioned above, many people were equally disillusioned and angry with EU institutions whose policies they blamed for driving their country into a downward spiral.
- ³⁹ Examples of such organizations include: the Help Children in Greece foundation, the Neofixthentes stin Ollandia, the New Diaspora and the Nederlands-Griekse Mediacirkel in Amsterdam and reloadGreece, The Greek Energy Forum and Hellenic Hope in London.
- ⁴⁰ Similar viewpoints were also recorded among member of the Greek Diaspora in Australia by Mavroudi, 'Helping the Homeland?'
- ⁴¹ It should be noted that overall the Greeks in London had considerably more favourable experiences.
- ⁴² De Haas, *Engaging Diasporas*.
- ⁴³ Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, 'Creating an Enabling Environment for Diasporas' Participation in Homeland Development', *International Migration* 50/1 (2012), p. 90.
- ⁴⁴ Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor, 'Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal', *Population and Development Review* 19/3 (1993), pp. 451-454