

ETUDES HELLENIQUES

HELLENIC STUDIES

**LA NOUVELLE
IMMIGRATION GRECQUE
THE NEW WAVE OF
GREEK MIGRATION**

Edited by / Sous la direction de

Michael Damanakis

Stephanos Constantinides

Contributors / Contributions de

Stephanos Constantinides

Michael Damanakis

John Ieronimakis

Dionysia Kontogianni

Theodosia Michelakaki

Aris Michopoulos

Efthimia Papalexopoulou

Anastasios M. Tamis

Poètes Chypriotes / Cypriot Poets

Livres Reçus / Books Received

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The New Greek Immigration

Michael Damanakis*
Stephanos Constantinides**

The contributions in this issue are divided into two parts. The first part includes articles referring to the movement of populations from Greece to other countries, and the second, articles relating to entry and establishment of immigrants in Greece. In other words, the purpose of this issue is, firstly, Greece as a country of emigration, and secondly as a country of immigration.

If we define migration as the movement of people from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent residence, then the modern Greek diaspora is the result of movements that took place in different historical periods, from the fall of Constantinople (1453) till today.

These movements originated, until 1830, from the Ottoman Empire and were mainly destined to commercial centers in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, neighboring Ottoman Empire countries and led to the creation of the “historical Greek diaspora”.

After 1830 and until the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1922), the populations which were voluntarily or involuntarily migrating had as starting points the Ottoman territory and the territory of the newly established Greek state and as a destination the regions as mentioned above, as well as southern Russia and Transcaucasia. These movements gradually reinforced the existing “historical Greek diaspora”.

In other words, the historical Greek diaspora arose on account of historical events from the mid-15th century up to the creation of the Modern Greek State and after its creation until the end of World War I, and the Asia Minor Disaster (1922).

Until the last decade of the 19th century, the movements from the newly established Greek state to the commercial communities of the diaspora and

* University of Crete

** Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research Canada-KEEK

between the Communities had a strong commercial character. In contrast, the last decade of the 19th century inaugurated a new form of immigration: labor immigration, first to the U.S. and later in other countries of immigration. The worker-immigrants, settled in host countries of the western world, USA, Canada, Australia, initially, and later Europe, and created immigrant communities, which are the basis of the organized “immigrant Greek diaspora”.

From 1890 until the early 1970s, Greeks made several migrations, dominated by that from 1952 to 1972 during which approximately 1,200,000 Greeks migrated, mainly to the USA, Canada, Australia and into the central and northern European countries.

After the restoration of democracy in Greece in 1974, the accession of the country to the European Union and especially the growth rates until the first decade of the 21st century, created the illusion that the Greek emigration was a phenomenon of the past. Indeed, Greece was transformed from a country of emigration into a country of immigration.

This illusion was dispelled in 2009, when the latent “economic crisis” broke out and the country entered a new phase of migration. The countries of destination being this time, primarily the European Union countries and secondly the traditional immigration countries for the Greeks; i.e., the USA, Canada, and Australia.

The preference for European countries is due to the free movement of populations, geographic proximity and employment opportunities, especially in the economically robust and reunified Germany.

We use the term new migration (*neometanastefsi*) to describe the post-2009 migration of Greeks to these countries, not only because it takes place after a “break” of four decades, but also because it differs from the previous migration outflows.

By analogy with the term new migration (*neometanastefsi*) we use the term new migrant (*neometanastis*), although particularly people with academic qualifications who move in European Union countries, perceive themselves as european workers, within the single European labor market (free movement of workers), and less as immigrants.

The main object of this issue is the new migration (*neometanastefsi*), namely, the investigation of the migration process, installation and integration of new

Greek migrants in the host countries, their organization and future orientation.

Specifically, *Michael Damanakis* analyzes the movements of the new Greek immigrants in European Union countries, taking the example of Germany, which is their main destination, not only because of its geographical proximity to Greece and the existence of large Greek communities there, but primarily because of the employment opportunities that it offers.

Aris Michopoulos deals with the Greek immigration to the United States, its different periods and the creation of the Greek American diaspora. He also examines the immigration during the last thirteen years and especially the period after the crisis (2010) in Greece. Paradoxically, he found no significant change, as there are seemingly low immigration numbers today from Greece. The paper explored various avenues to explain this finding. These include: the full membership of Greece in the EEC, the change in its standard of living after 1980, its non-existent population growth lately, and finally the possibility of a “masked immigration” that takes the form of “tourists”, students and scientists.

Stephanos Constantinides deals with a new Greek immigration to Canada. He refers to the different categories of the new immigrants and the difficulties they face in employment and integration. His article, after a quick reference to the Greek communities of Canada, analyzes the new Greek immigration to this country since the beginning of the economic crisis in Greece in 2009. He noted that it is a migration of young people consisting of various categories: those who are Canadian citizens of Greek origin who returned to Greece and now are returning to Canada; those who have obtained a work permit; those accepted as permanent residents, and students. The author also raises the question of the organization of these new immigrants and their effort to find employment and integrate into Canadian society.

Tasos Tamis deals with the new Greek immigration to Australia noting the massive return in this country of the Greeks having Australian citizenship. These are the Greeks settled permanently in Greece during the period 1980-2008, over 135,000. This massive influx of more than 100,000 actual and/or prospective Australian citizens enriches Australia socio-economically and culturally as most of them are members of the middle class, comprising of professionals, technocrats, businessmen, scientists, and artists who had attained

TAFE or tertiary education. However, neither the organized Greek community nor the Australian institutional structure were prepared to receive this massive influx of compatriots; currently, there are no communal or state infrastructure or networks to absorb, utilize or assist them to conform, adapt and acculturate.

The second part of this volume consists of contributions from John Ieronymakis and *Theodosia Michelakakis, Dionysia Kontogiannis and Efsthymia Papalexopoulou*. Both articles relate to the group of Albanian immigrants, who constitute the majority (52%) of all immigrants in Greece, according to the 2011 census.

It should be stressed that the number of immigrants in Greece is not limited to the 912,029 officially registered (199,201 nationals of EU countries, 708,003 third country nationals and 4,825 with unspecified nationality), but should be close to one and a half million.

The high number of illegal immigrants in Greece is due to the fact that Greece is essentially a country of transit entry for immigrants looking to establish themselves in other European countries.

As Greece is in crisis not only does not need immigrant labor, but its own citizens emigrate because of unemployment. However the increasing number of irregular migrants in Greece is due to the fact that modern economic migrants and refugees simply use Greece as transit entry and stepping stone to a further move to richer European countries.

Nevertheless, the “Dublin II Regulation” gets them trapped in Greece, and the Greek society to feel compromised by a problem that is European, and which is transformed by the “Dublin II Regulation» to a national one. With the responsibility of course of the Greek government which co-signed this regulation.

The issue of ‘illegal’ entry of immigrants in the southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Spain) and the immigration policy of the EU itself is a complex problem that can not be analysed in this issue. We limit ourselves to outline the path of movement and integration of Albanian families in Greece, from 1990 until today. The fact that the Albanian immigrant group is not only the largest one but also the oldest in Greece makes it possible to outline this accession process.

Ieronymakis analyzes the processes of disorganization, reorganization and unification of Albanian families during the 1990s, while Michelakakis, Kontogiannis and Papalexopoulos in their own study deal with immigration and educational narratives of some children of these families, which manage to finish successfully Greek primary and secondary schools and proceed to the Greek universities.

Analysis and developments both of the Greek new emigration (neometanastefsi) of Greeks and immigration from third countries to Greece are necessarily limited. However, they will ultimately help the reader to form at least a rough image of the modern Greek emigration and immigration.